

Last Chance Flight

by talkingfishlou

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Summary: A year after Drago Bloodvist, Hiccup is now Chief and Astrid is struggling for her independence now that they are married. This is the cause of many fights between the two Haddocks. When a truly devastating accident happens, and Astrid gets surprising news, she must protect Berk all alone, while Hiccup fights to return to his wife, his island, and his future. Rated T for violence.

1. Warheads

It did not take long for Astrid to wonder off from the meeting. Hiccup had been inside for what seemed like hours. Now that Hiccup was preparing to become chief, his father had entrusted him with the task of a peace treaty between Berk and the Warhead Tribe. This had become a difficult task, no wonder, with a name such as Warhead. For once, Astrid had decided to tag along on Hiccup's chiefly adventures, mostly for an excuse to get away from Berk.

It was hard to believe it was exactly one year since Drago Bloodvist. It had been one year ago when Hiccup surprisingly found his long lost mother, it was one year ago when he was foolishly obsessed with the idea that everyone deserved a second chance, and Drago could be reasoned with. It had been exactly one year since the death of his father, Stoick the Vast. Hiccup and Astrid had been married for three months, and the pair couldn't be happier. The only problem was the fights. It was safe to say Hiccup and Astrid were opposites. Hiccup liked flying at night time, while Astrid preferred waking up before dawn. Hiccup liked fish while Astrid liked chicken. Hiccup needed to sleep on the left side of the bed to stretch out his bad leg, but Astrid hated sleeping by an open window.

Over the three months of marriage, the two had tried to walk in each other's shoes, or shoe. Unfortunately, they found themselves fighting more than ever. Astrid decided to tag along on this journey so that they could talk, or she could talk and Hiccup would listen. So far, the trip was boring, and Astrid had barely gotten to speak to Hiccup.

The young adult had to grit her teeth a few times, for she felt more like a trophy wife than a warrior. She practically hung off Hiccup's side to avoid the drunks in The Great Hall and trying to keep her mouth shut at the "Mrs. Haddock" comments. After almost having ale thrown on her, Astrid decided now was a good time to sneak away. She excused herself to the outhouse.

Astrid found it hard to get out of The Great Hall. The room was set up much different than The Great Hall at home; this one had multiple floors, each one connected by multiple staircases. Each floor was balcony a bit smaller than the one below, and was bustling with loud dancers and musicians, all well on their way to being drunk. Each staircase contained herds of adoring couples trying to find some privacy, drunk men who could hardly stay upright, and even a few lone children that tugged on Astrid's skirt and said how beautiful she was. Astrid smiled at the children, and gave the drunks surrounding them a fierce look of disapproval. She wondered who in their right mind would allow their children to attend such an event. She then passed a series of waiters, which looked suspiciously like slaves if she said so herself.

"Care for a glass, ma'am?" A filthy man held out a shaking tray.

Another touched Astrid's hand softly, "I can show you to a seat, miss."

Astrid tugged her arm away and looked at the two men kindly, "No thank you. I'm going out for some air," she reached into her pocket and dug out two silver coins, "Please take these for your consideration, though."

She placed one in each of their hands; the men looked utterly confused and scurried away quickly without even a thank you. Astrid shook her head, poor men. She was about to journey on when she saw the people closest to her giving her strange looks for paying the slaves. She knew that not all places were as kind as Berk, and Berk didn't even have slaves. Astrid knew Hiccup wouldn't mind that she gave away his money.

"That sure is nice of you, my friend," Astrid turned to face a tall man. He was slender, with blonde hair that tied up in braid. Astrid couldn't help to notice the scar that went from his right eye to his cheekbone.

"Why is everyone staring at me?" Astrid muttered back.

"They are not used to such kind folks, I assume," the man winked at Astrid before joining his friends once more, "G'day to ya."

She blinked. The blonde roughly pushed herself passed the yelling drunks and dancers; she opened the door quickly, allowing the sunset to sneak in. She took a deep breath once outside. It was like she was on a different island. The streets were deserted. The only noise was the echoing music from The Great Hall and the ocean's waves crashing over the sand nearby. The wind softly tugged on her hair as she made her way down the steps.

She kicked a rock or two down the dirt road when she heard a chiming noise. She turned her head in the direction to see what looked like a

shack, but on closer inspection seemed to be a small shop. Just above the entrance was some sort of ornament. It was made out of many strings separated by a circular piece of wood. Held on the bottom of the strings were crudely cut slivers of silver and chunks of stones and wood. When the wind passed it, the strings would rattle creating a musical ring. Astrid felt a smile tug on her lips and she reached up to touch the silver. All of a sudden, she felt a hand grab onto her wrist, the touch was rough, and Astrid jumped.

"Ya break it, yeh buy it, lady," Astrid looked up to see a very dirty man with black teeth giving her a dangerous look.

Astrid tried to pull her arm away but this man was too strong, he held her at such an angle Astrid's arm became sore; "I wasn't going to break it. But I will break your neck if you don't let go off me."

The man laughed as Astrid continued to struggle, but after a moment, Astrid realized there was no way of getting herself out of his grip. Instead she went as still as a statue and looked boldly into the man's cold eyes, "Let. Me. Go."

The man held her arm tighter, "What's a pr'y girl like yer self doin' all alone on a night like this? Shouldn't yer be partyin'?"

"I am not alone," Astrid sneered, "And I really should be getting back. My- my husband will be expecting me," Astrid hoped that last part would go through his thick skull.

"Husband?" he pulled Astrid closer, "What kind of man would allow his lady to be outside all by herself?"

Astrid felt herself snap; she knelt back and kicked him in the groin. With a roar, she grabbed a walking stick that was for sale and swung back to whip him once over the back with it. He groaned loudly and rolled over to the side.

Astrid examined the stick, "Ha, looks like it's not broken. Good thing, I didn't have enough to pay for it."

The man grinned seemingly straight through her, then she realized that he was looking at something behind her. Astrid was just about to turn around when she was seized and picked up by another man. As far as she could tell, the man was at least Fishlegs' size. He held her arms behind her back and the other man lifted himself off the ground. He took a second to regain his balance before getting in Astrid's face.

Astrid really messed up this time. How did she get herself in such a mess? Why did she always manage to find herself in the worst possible situations?

"You feisty little-" he swallowed, "yer sure are a lot braver than any women I ever...well. Since you got no money to pay fer the damages you've cost me. Looks like I have no other choice but to-"

Astrid felt his breath on her face. She winced slightly before head butting the man. This time, he hardly fell backwards. Instead he lifted his arm and socked her right in the cheek. Astrid's head

whipped to the side for a moment as she felt the other man lower her to the ground and push her into the grass. Panic had begun to set in.

"STORMFLY!" she yelled for her dragon, "HICCUP!"

* * *

><p>Hiccup felt his eyelids begin to droop. He sat at the corner of the long table with his chin in one hand. The meeting seemed to drag on much longer than he expected. Roren, the chef of the Warheads tribe, sat at the other end of the table, telling Hiccup and the other men a long story of how "He knew all along that dragons and people were meant to mix. He had a feeling in his stomach about it". Hiccup's mind wondered as he thought of where Toothless might be. He was probably off with Stormfly somewhere having incredible adventures while Hiccup was listening to the dulllest meeting he had ever attended. Hiccup jumped when an enormous man took Astrid's seat next to him.<p>

The man swayed drunkenly, back and forth, Hiccup was surprised the man could sit straight, "Is this seat taken?"

"Actually..." Hiccup swallowed, the man was probably three hundred pounds heavier than him. But that was his wife's seat, and she had apparently gone out for some air, but that was a long time ago. Hiccup started to explain his answer to the man when the man began to guzzle down Astrid's mead, which she hardly touched, "alright, make yourself comfortable."

The man might have been ignoring Hiccup, but at least he acknowledged the fact that Hiccup was there. Astrid, on the other hand, had completely shut him out ever since they had gotten married. Even when Hiccup tried to talk to her, she would roll her eyes or walk away. They hardly talked to each other unless they absolutely had to. Hiccup was surprised Astrid even offered to come along with him, he was sure she would love a few nights by herself. Hiccup tapped his fingers on the table, hoping Roren's story would finish soon.

Astrid kicked and punched. She breathed heavily and focused on untangling herself from the men's arms. They were pretty strong, but Astrid was strong as well. She desperately punched the air, missing her target every time. She could hear the laughs of the men and it made her stomach turn.

"Stormfly!" She called out desperately to her dragon once more; there was no way a human could hear her, not with all the noise happening in The Great Hall, "Toothless!"

When she was about to give up, she felt a sudden gust of wind, a yell, and the big man was no longer holding her down. Astrid opened one eye just in time to see the skinny man being thrown off of her into the shack. When Astrid was finally free from the men's grasps, she felt Stormfly begin to pull her by her shirt.

Hiccup's wish was granted when the whole party was interrupted. A loud roar was heard from outside The Great Hall, and Hiccup could recognize the roar of his best friend from anywhere. Hiccup bolted out of his chair and down the many staircases. He stormed his way out of The Hall without his usual politeness. He burst through the front

door and immediately saw the black scales of his dragon. Toothless looked up, sensing his friend's presence. Hiccup felt an overwhelming relief that the dragon was alright. But something felt wrong, and his eyes widened when he noticed his wife on her hands and knees beside Stormfly. Hiccup felt his legs quickly carry him over to the scene. He dropped in front of Astrid. She was shivering, not from the cold but from fright. She let out a few nasty coughs before showing her face to Hiccup. Her face was calm, but her eyes showed the truth of how terrified and alive she felt. A gruesome cut had begun to swell on her right cheekbone.

"What happened?" Hiccup bellowed.

Astrid shook her head, out of sheer habit; she wrapped her arms around Hiccup quickly, desperately trying to catch her breath. At least she would finally feel safe in his arms, even if they were constantly fighting.

Hiccup allowed her to catch her breath before pushing her back, he tucked a blonde strand behind her ear, "Who did this to you?"

Astrid looked in the direction of the men, but they were long gone. Instead, they were surrounded by the majority of the Warhead population. She saw hundreds of confused eyes staring down at her. The chief of the clan, a man about the age of fifty, pushed his way to the front of the crowd. He was a tall plump man with a silly, curled mustache. He looked dazed for a moment before reaching down to help Astrid up. She declined the offer and raised herself from the ground. Hiccup stood up with her and examined the cut on her face.

"Oh my, what happened, Mrs. Haddock?" The Chief asked.

Astrid searched the crowd, the two men were nowhere to be found, "Two of your men is what happened to me! They grabbed me! They-" Astrid felt her cheeks burn in front of the crowd, "If Stormfly and Toothless hadn't saved me. I-"

"Sorry. My men? That's impossible!" The Chief laughed, "My men would never do such a thing!"

Astrid turned to Hiccup, she expected something from him. Anything. Instead, the look he gave her was just as accusing as the old Chief's.

"It was_ your men_, they- they ran off," Astrid explained, "I believe one of them owns this shack."

Astrid heard the crowd laugh and her cheeks burned even more. The Chief laughed as well, "My dear. This- this shack is run by Old Ms. Betsy."

Astrid noticed a frail old woman make her way to the front of the crowd and examined the shack behind her. She used a shaky finger to point to Astrid's feet. Astrid looked down, only to realize she was standing on the walking stick, snapped in two.

"You break it, you buy it!" Ms. Betsy grumbled.

Astrid felt her blood boil, her knuckles went white as the crowd laughed some more. After a moment of two, the people dispersed to

continue the party. After the crowd died down, the Chief turned to Hiccup and Astrid once more.

"Now, Mrs. Haddock-"

"Astrid." her teeth clenched.

"Astrid, are you alright? Did any harm come to you? Are you-"

"I'm fine!" She roared, "No! They didn't do anything, I wouldn't let them. I just want them caught and arrested. I don't want them to hurt anyone else."

"Yes. I will personally spread the word. After the celebration, of course. Please, Hiccup, Astrid, come back inside, the night is still young!"

Astrid took Hiccup's hand; she needed to speak with him privately, away from the noise and laughing guests and that yak butt of a Chief. She practically threw him against the wall outside of The Hall.

"I'll take you home, I swear. I just have to sign the peace treaty," he grabbed her shoulders, "if I ever get my hands on the men who attacked you."

She brushed him away, "You seem all high and mighty now, but why weren't you defending me back there?"

"What do you mean?"

"They were laughing at me, Hiccup! That- that Chief treated me like a child! This whole place thinks that I'm a joke. It's the joke! And all the while you keep your mouth shut- for once! Why didn't you have my back?"

Hiccup raised his eyebrows, "Astrid, I know better not to get involved when it comes to your anger. I didn't want to cause a scene. I'm trying to impress these people! I'm the Chief now, if you haven't noticed."

Astrid huffed, "I've noticed."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I'm your girlfriend! - Ugh wife! I'm supposed to count on you too!"

"I know," Hiccup said, "I'm sorry. I should have said something. Just please, this trip is almost over."

Astrid shook her head as she began to climb Stormfly's back, "It's already over for me, Hiccup. I'm going back to Berk."

"Astrid!" Hiccup yelled, "It's almost dark! You can't fly home now!"

"I don't want to hear it, Hiccup. I can't stand another second of this 'Mrs. Haddock'ing or 'Warhead tradition'. I'll see you back in Berk when you are good and ready."

In a matter of seconds, Astrid was in the air. Hiccup stretched his neck up to see her. He felt Toothless brush up beside him, the dragon roared at his friend leaving. Now who was he supposed to play with?

Hiccup looked gloomily at the dragon, "I really messed up this time, didn't I?"

2. Not Ready

Ingrid Hofferson was quite surprised to be awoken by a knock at her door. It was early in the morning, and the sun hadn't even come out yet. Her heart raced as she quickly threw on her house coat. The older lady had been a bit on edge the past four months. Once her daughter got married she was left alone in the house, except for her younger son, Ekon, who had just turned thirteen.

Her husband had died many years ago in battle, leaving Ingrid to raise the children by herself. Astrid had been seven years old when her father died, and Ingrid remembered it being especially hard on her. Her son was not much more than a baby at the time and did not know the strong man who was his father, but it took Astrid a very long time to realize she would no longer wrestle or play battle or watch the stars with her father.

In a few years, Ingrid would have an empty nest, and she wasn't quite sure what her next move would be. That scared her. She had a fair idea who was knocking on her door, but she still had her guard up. She unlocked the door and opened it to find her daughter shivering in the rain, soaking wet. The older woman gasped at the sight of Astrid's swelling cheek. Ingrid rushed her daughter inside and got a towel. Astrid took the towel and stormed into the kitchen.

"I'm sick of it."

"What happened?" Ingrid put a cloth to Astrid's cheek, "Did he...?"

"No. Of course not."

"Oh," she took two mugs from the cupboard, "but you and Hiccup had a fight."

Ingrid watched her daughter fall back into her chair and bury her face in her arms. This display of emotion was quite new for her daughter. Astrid had been a bright eyed, confident girl. Her daughter and Hiccup had only been married for three months, but the whole marriage seemed to have tumbled out of control in that short time. The older woman stroked Astrid's hair.

"Alright, out with it. What happened this time?"

Astrid clenched her teeth and told her mother the whole story. The older lady fell into her own chair and shook her head, "and what did Hiccup say about all this?"

Astrid shook her head, "I don't want to talk about it."

"That fish bone. I will wring him out if you want me too. I don't care if he's the Chief."

"No. No mom," Astrid mumbled, "Hiccup's not the problem. I'm the problem."

Ingrid bit her lip, "It seems like every day you two butt heads...I just want you to know, whatever happensâ€|"

"Mom," Astrid huffed, she knew exactly where her mother was going, "I love him. I know he is going through the tough time right now with losing his dad and everything, and I know we had to get married. But...I just don't want my greatest legacy to be the Chief's wife."

"Oh honey," Ingrid opened her arms and Astrid's head fell onto her shoulder, "I think I know how you are feelingâ€|"

Astrid sniffled, "You do?"

"Oh yes. See, when I married your father, I felt the same way. I didn't feel like a warrior anymore, I felt like your father's shadow."

"What did you do?"

"Well, after a while," Ingrid pushed her daughter's hair out of her face, "I learned how to ignore it. I kept on being a warrior, an even better one; I strived for excellence. I learned how to become a better person, a wife, and a mother."

The pride in her mother's voice made Astrid shake her head; "I don't think I can do that. I'm a Viking. I can't cook, I burn water, I'm probably a terrible wife and I will most likely be an even worse mother. I'm not like that, I am a viking."

"Astrid," Astrid lifted her head and looked into her blue eyes; "I believe that you can be both."

* * *

><p>Hiccup was furious. How could Astrid leave him on Warhead all alone? People had noticed the absence of new Hooligans Chief's wife. Hiccup could either say that they got into a fight, which would spread rumours, or that Astrid was feeling poorly, which would also spread obvious rumours. But time, like always, passed. Hiccup soon found himself holding a pen to the peace treaty and shaking hands with Rorek.<p>

It took him half a day to travel home. Toothless was a fast dragon, they could have made it home faster had it not been for Astrid's left behind luggage he was carrying. When Hiccup returned to Berk, he lugged his things into the house and immediately searched for his wife. She wasn't in the house, and Stormfly's pen was empty.

He checked Astrid's mother's house first. The only person home was Astrid's fifteen year old brother, Ekon. He was not as built as Astrid was, and was sort of lanky for his age. He had dark brown hair, like Astrid's father. He was on his knees in the front yard petting a group of baby terrible terrors.

"Hey, Ekon," Hiccup bent down to pick one of the babies up, "What'cha doing?"

"I'm going to train them," he told his brother in law, "they will be my terrible terror army."

Hiccup examined the red terrible terror in his hands, it was a bit smaller than the others, and her wings looked a little shorter.

"That one's Tera, she's my favourite."

"Tera the Terrible Terror, that's a tongue twister."

Ekon got up and took the Tera from Hiccup's arms, "she might be small right now, but I'm making sure she gets fed more than the others. she's going to be strong, just you wait and see."

Hiccup didn't look as hopeful, the dragon looked weak, she shivered in warm day light and Hiccup could tell from her scales she wasn't healthy.

Ekon saw Hiccup's look, his eyebrows knit together, "I think that's why I like her the most."

"Why's that?" Hiccup asked.

He shrugged his shoulders, "I dunno...Because even though she's small and weak, she's trying. She's not giving up, and I'm not going to give up on her. Maybe that's what makes her special, she's a fighter, I just know she will get stronger."

"I'm looking forward to it," Hiccup looked towards the house.

"My sister isn't here," Ekon said, trying to pull his fingers out of Tera's mouth, "but I should warn you, I heard her come over last night, and she didn't sound happy."

"Ah- well...Wish me luck, Ekon."

Ekon smiled.

. The only other place Astrid could be was The Academy. Hiccup kept his head down and rushed through the village thinking of some sort of apology.. When he entered the arena, he saw Astrid tossing fish into Stormfly's mouth. Hiccup felt Toothless push his behind, he gave the dragon a glance before walking into the arena.

"Hey."

Astrid raised an eyebrow to the familiar voice, which she turned around, sure enough there he was. She reached into the bucket and grabbed another fish. She threw it into Stormfly's mouth and wiped her hand on her skirt.

"Astrid," Hiccup stepped in front of her, "I'm so sorry-"

"You don't have to apologise, Hiccup," she wiped her brow from sweat, "it's okay."

"No, Astrid, it's not. I should have stood up for you back there. I should have ripped that Thor- forsaken Chief's head off. Instead I was a coward. I'm sorry."

Astrid looked down to her feet, "Well...Like I said, it doesn't matter anymore. I'll see you later," she grabbed the bucket.

Hiccup's brows knit together, "That's it? Don't you want to talk?"

Just as she was about to leave, she turned her head to look at him. Her blonde braid fell over her back and she looked at him with her sparkling blue eyes, eyes which were full of something Hiccup couldn't read, "Is there something you want to say, Hiccup?"

Hiccup stuck his hands in his pocket, "No. I justâ€¦Never mind."

"Then I should be going, I promised Stormfly a flight."

And with that, she called her dragon and flew away.

Hiccup didn't understand women. How could Astrid be so angry at him, and when he tries to talk to her, she goes and does this. It was nightfall, and Astrid still had not returned. He patiently waited at his kitchen table. No, it was their kitchen table. His fingers tapped over and over, Toothless went to the window and let out a whine.

"I know, bud. I miss them too..."

The dragon sniffed.

Hiccup stretched out his back, "I wonder what's gotten into her. Gods, I wish she would just talk to me, you know? I can't stand the silence."

The dragon rested his head on Hiccup's lap; Hiccup petted his head, "Thanks, bud. You always know what to say."

Just then, the door burst open, making the two best friends jump. Astrid was in the door way, she looked tired. She nodded to him before setting Stormfly's saddle on the table. Hiccup stood up, half expecting her to say something. Instead she took a stick and poked at the fire place.

Hiccup bit his lip, "How was your flight?"

"Great, actually..." she yawned, "I'm really tired."

"You were gone a long time..."

Hiccup saw Astrid's shoulders slump and she tossed the stick aside aggressively, "Yeah, well."

Hiccup didn't think "Yeah, well" was much of an answer. He decided enough was enough for tonight; he climbed the stairs to the bedroom.

"Wait," Astrid called out to him.

He turned around; she stood at the bottom of the banister. She looked nervous. Hiccup raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah?"

"I...I need the key to the barn," she said, "to put Stormfly's saddle away."

Hiccup's mouth shut, he reached into his pocket while walking down the steps. When he was one up from Astrid, he gently put it into her hands.

"Thanks," she reached up and kissed his cheek.

Hiccup watched her leave. A hand went up to where she kissed him. Something was up. And he was going to find out what it was.

* * *

><p>Astrid tapped her fingers nervously, over and over again. The dress was too tight, she had told her mother but she only said her daughter looked beautiful. As Astrid sat down, the dress tugged at her ribs and stomach making it hard to breathe. It was red, and stupid, Astrid thought. She hated long sleeves and she especially hated the material of her dress swinging between her ankles. She was sitting at the head of the table in an uncomfortable dress, in uncomfortable shoes and an overall terribly uncomfortable setting. Her boyfriend was late, really super late. The only reason she agreed to dressing up for this Snoggletog party was because he promised her a new, faster saddle if she did. When Hiccup didn't show, they decided to serve the food anyway.

Astrid watched Snoutlout and the rest of the gang walk up to her, he started laughing. Astrid looked down to her dress, "Say it, and I will kill you."

Snoutlout beamed with amusement, "I wasn't going to say anything!"

"Yeah, whatever..." Astrid took a sip of her mead.

Fishlegs saw that Astrid was upset; he placed a hand on her shoulder, "Don't worry, Astrid. I'm sure he will be here soon."

Astrid couldn't take it anymore, she left The Great Hall for some air. Just as the freezing night air hit her, she saw a figure stumble up the steps. It was him. He was still pulling on his formal apparel as he rushed up the steps. Astrid noticed his hair was almost frozen to his forehead and a small cut was on his bottom lip. She was shocked as he ran past her. He stopped. Astrid watched him slowly turn around and his mouth dropped in shock.

"Astrid?"

She felt her blood begin to boil, "Where have you been?"

Hiccup's eyes widened, "You look...beautiful."

"Where have you been?" she repeated, "Thank you," she added.

"I-" Hiccup was lost for words.

"You are in big trouble, mister!" Astrid poked his chest with her finger, "I was in there having the worst time of my life, while you were out flying!"

"Actually, I wasn't flying."

Astrid's eyebrows knit together, "I had to wear this!" she raised her arms so Hiccup could see the full dress, "All night! For you! And you were not even here to look at me! Totally not worth it."

Hiccup laughed, "Astrid, I-"

"Go on, tell me the excuse."

Hiccup reached into his pocket. Astrid froze as he pulled out a ring. Not just any ring, a wedding ring. She felt her arms return to her sides as Hiccup smiled down to her, "I was out flying, and I dropped this in the woods. Do you know how hard it is to find a wedding ring in the snow?! Like, super hard. Luckily I- being an excellent explorer- managed to find it after almost three hours of skipping through the woods.

Astrid stayed in shock. She watched him painfully try to get down on one knee. Somehow, he managed to get stuck in the middle, so he was bent down as far as he could without bending his knee, "Astrid," he began, "I have loved you my whole life. I remember when I thought you wouldn't come near me even if you were on fire and I had the only bucket of water in town, but that doesn't matter because I am so in love with you. This past year, I have gone through so many crazy things, like meeting my mother and the battle with Drago...and losing my father. So, if it's not too much to ask...will you do one more crazy thing for me...will you be my wife?"_

He struggled to get down, and Astrid let out a laugh. He gave up and stood up, "Yup, my leg is definitely frozen."

Astrid took his cheeks into her hands and kissed him, "That's okay. You went far enough."

"So...What do you say? Choose carefully, once you decide, you will be stuck with all this," Hiccup gestured to himself, "Forever."

"Of course," she whispered and kissed him softly, "of course."

When her eyes opened, she felt her heart suddenly sink at the memory. She had been having strange dreams all week, but this one was different. A memory. A very good memory. She looked over to Hiccup who was still fast asleep. She felt her eyes tear up at the memory. Why couldn't they be like that again, what had changed in the past few months that made them so...distant.

Astrid turned away from Hiccup and wiped her eyes.

Maybe she wasn't ready for this life just yet.

3. Just Like Old Times

****This story now takes place in the How to train your dragon 2 universe. I changed some bits in the previous chapters to make sense. Warning: spoilers from the second film.****

* * *

><p>Valka had difficulty believing that she had been gone for twenty years. The sand on Berk's shores still felt the same between her toes, and the sunrise reflected off of the watery horizon as it always had. It was like nothing had changed at all, except when it came to people; they had all changed. The young had grown old, the old had died, and new life had taken over everywhere; Valka could hardly count all the new people running around Berk. Those that she did remember shared awkward glances with her; they had been shocked when they first found out that she was alive, and not many knew what to say to her. Valka found herself isolated from the other Berkians, mostly because she wasn't ready to become one of them just yet. She had taken many trips up away with Cloudjumper, but there was nowhere for them to go. She could not even think about returning to her old home. The thought of The Great Bewilderbeast's large body decomposing on the shore of Dragon Cave, the thought of her beautiful sanctuary destroyed, everything she worked so hard on those past years completely ruined. The thought of returning to the place where she watched her husband die...no, it was too much.<p>

The only way Valka could stay positive was to think of the dragons, which were much happier now. Her son was right, everyone on Berk seemed to have a dragon now, she watched with delight as Deadly Nadders and Gronkles everywhere got spoiled rotten. The Monstrous Nightmares and Terrible Terrors were treated like royalty. She could even see her beautiful Scauldrons having fun down in the ocean blue. Yes...everything was going well.

For now.

One morning, she awoke from a deep sleep to a frantic knock at her door. She stayed in her own home, in the same bed she had shared with Stoick all those years ago. But she was quite surprised to hear a knock. Who could it be? Surely Hiccup would just come inside...She rolled out of bed and onto the floor, hiding herself from the doorway. She gasped as the knock rained through the house again. Once she realized the knock would not go away until she answered it, she slowly rose from the ground and went to the door. She opened it slowly, only revealing herself by a small crack. She was surprised to look down upon a boy.

"You're Valka, aren't you?" he asked suddenly.

Valka stood in shock at the boy, "...Yes."

The boy sighed with relief, "I'm Ekon!"

Valka stared at the boy before slowly closing the door.

"Wait!" Ekon called, he put his foot in the door frame, and "I need your help!"

"I am sure someone else can help you, strange boy."

Ekon pushed himself further into the door, "You don't understand; I'm Ekon, Astrid's brother! Like, your son's wife's brother. So we are practically related now!"

Valka opened the door just a crack, "Astrid's brother, you say?"

She could hardly see the resemblance. This boy had shaggy dark hair and a lanky posture, unlike Astrid's blonde hair and muscles. But she could see some of Mr. Hofferson in him. The blue eyes, the hair, even the smile which curved to the left a bit. She watched as his smile faded and he gasped, "I need your help?"

"With what?" her eyebrows knitted together

"It's my dragon," he explained, "She's sick, and I don't know what to doâ€¦.Please, you need to help me."

"I'm no Dragon Healer, go see Hiccup," she closed the door once again but he wouldn't budge.

Ekon snorted, "I can't. Hiccup's too busy dealing with my sister. And no one will listen to me!"

Valka pursed her lips, "I don't know..."

"Please," he repeated, his face serious, "you're my only hope."

* * *

><p>Hiccup climbed down the stairs that morning to find Astrid sitting at the dining room table with something in her hands. He stirred the fire and got his boot on. He stopped as he realized what was in his wife's hands. It was the map. The map they had spent almost a year creating together, the map of new lands, the map that they had stopped working on since The Battle. Hiccup stood over his wife, "What are you doing?"<p>

"Just lookingâ€¦" she replied as he sat next to her.

"What did you pull this old thing out for?"

"I was just looking, Hiccup," she seemed deep in thought.

Hiccup turned the map towards him. She was looking at Itchy Armpit, Hiccup almost laughed at the memory.

"You know, we could start it again, if you wanted," she told him softly.

Hiccup almost jumped with surprise as he looked down to find her blue eyes staring into his own for once. He felt his heart race, maybe she had finally come around. But then he felt his heart sink as he looked down to the map. How could he ever find the time to complete this? He hardly had time to fly with Toothless anymore, let alone fly off the edge of the world. Besides, this was not something he wanted to live

through again. Ever since his father died, it was hard to do the things he used to. He found it time to move on with his life.

"Yeah...I'm not really feeling it anymore" he shrugged, "I guess it was kind of childish."

Astrid frowned, "I don't think it's childish."

Hiccup smiled sadly, "I'm Chief now, Astrid. I would love to do the things we used too...but I just don't have time anymore."

Astrid was quiet for a moment before letting out a huff of amusement, "You're right, what was I thinking. It was stupid."

Hiccup didn't know what to say as she gently folded the map up and put it back in its home. He never knew she cared so much about it. He always thought it was...his thing. He watched as she pulled on her armor.

"So," he asked casually, "any plans for today?"

"Oh, you know," she said, "Just the usual: Flight with Stormfly, Academy training, and a trip to see mom. How about you?"

Hiccup raised an eyebrow, "Actually...I'm a free man. No meetings or anything today."

Hiccup could almost see Astrid light up. She spun around and gave him a smile he hadn't seen in months, "Really?" she said, "Do you want to come with me?"

He stood in shock for a moment, almost not believing the words that came from her mouth, "YES!"

The yell surprised her and she backed away with shock. Hiccup looked around to see Toothless giving him the same look as his wife. He coughed, "I mean...Sure! Why not...nothing better to do."

Hiccup beamed with joy as Astrid wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him softly, "Great. I'll wait for you outside."

As she left, Hiccup's hands flew to the sky, thanking the gods for being so kind to him.

Hiccup and Astrid decided to have breakfast together in The Great Hall. His face broke into a smile as he felt Astrid reach down and hold his hand in hers as they walked. When they entered the busy center of wonderful smelling food and familiar company, they found their friends at the usual table. Snotlout and Fishlegs were in the middle of an intense arm wrestling match, and Tuffnut had his head on the table, visibly tired. Ruffnut was throwing peices of bread at Eret's head.

"Hey guys," Hiccup said as he sat down, "What's going on?"

Eret sighed as another piece of bread hit his head, "Oh, the same old same old. Dumb and dumber over there are fighting," he whispered to Hiccup as he sat down next to him, "do they ever stop?"

Hiccup smiled, "Ah- no. Not really."

Eret leaned in more, addressing Astrid more than Hiccup, "And that blasted girl, she won't leave me alone!"

Astrid laughed and looked at Ruffnut who was staring at Eret. She looked back to her new friend, "Give her a break, you're her first love."

"Disgusting..." Eret said

"Well, how is everyone else this morning?" Hiccup addressed his old friends, "Tuffnut? What's wrong with you?"

He grunted.

Hiccup and Astrid exchanged looks before looking towards the others for help.

"He got rejected," Snotlout said, finally letting go of Fishlegs' hand, "Last night. By...whoever she is."

Hiccup and Astrid's eyes followed Snotlout's finger until it reached a table of laughing girls. One of the girl's cheeks blushed when she saw them staring; she turned away and joined her friends.

"Oh no, not another one, Tuff," Hiccup patted his friends back.

"You should have seen it," Fishlegs whispered, "It was so...sad. She dumped water over his head."

"And then I, being a fantastic friend, got him sodding drunk!" Eret laughed, "Guess he can't hold his liquor."

"My life is over, don't talk to me." Tuffnut whined.

"Tuffnut, I'm sure it wasn't that bad," Astrid rubbed his back, "There's plenty of yak in the-"

Tuffnut's hands slammed onto the table and his head came up in an instant, "That's easy for you to say, Astrid! You're married! You have your whole life set out for you! And these losers," Tuffnut pointed to Snotlout and Fishlegs, "Have my sister to fight over! Who I should say, is one of the last single ladies on Berk! I have no one! I don't even have a chance! And him!" Tuffnut pointed to a surprised Eret, "Him and his...his stupid muscles and scars, he's going to be in a relationship before the next sheep hits the ground! Unlike me, who will BE ALONE FOREVER!" his head slammed back into the table.

Astrid let out a silent "wow"; the others looked visibly surprised by this outburst as well.

"Like I said," Fishlegs whispered, "It's kind of pathetic."

When the two finished breakfast, it was not a surprise what they planned to do for the rest of the day. They were going flying. They decided it was time for a long flight far away from Berk with just the two of them; it had been forever since they had done so, and they hardly had a Honeymoon to begin with. Astrid packed some fish and

bread and anything else they would need. Hiccup hurried through the house grabbing the supplies he was missing.

"Come on, Hiccup!" Astrid yelled from the front door, "We're wasting daylight!"

Hiccup hurried after his wife but came to a stop at the front door, he quickly turned on his heels, and he ran and grabbed the map. Who knows, it could come in handy. When Hiccup left the house, he saw Astrid waiting expectantly on Stormfly.

"You ready?" she asked.

Hiccup nodded and gave Toothless a quick rub down; he always did better on long flights with a stretch. It didn't take long for the two of them to be high in the air. It was a perfect fall day; the sun was shining with a slight salty breeze. Astrid couldn't take her eyes off of the deep ocean as they flew side by side. Her eyes suddenly fell on Hiccup as she saw him spin upside down on Toothless with a smile. She shook her head and laughed. Show off. She dove down with Stormfly and did the same. Hiccup flew just over Astrid and touched her head with his hand. She laughed once more.

"Hmm," Hiccup gave her a mischievous look, "I think it's about time for my own flight."

Astrid rolled her eyes, "Oh no! Not that crazy flight suit of yours again."

"I'll have you know," he told Astrid as he pulled Toothless' gear to glide, "that this flight suit is one of my safer inventions."

"You sure don't make things easy!" Astrid laughed over the wind.

Before she could stop him, Hiccup jumped off Toothless with a yell of excitement. Her heart raced as she watched him fall to the waves below. At what seemed like the last moment, he pulled the strings by his legs making the wings appear from the suit. He immediately gained altitude and flew up beside Astrid. Astrid watched with amazement. She couldn't believe she was literally flying alongside her husband. Something suddenly hit her as she saw the look of excitement in his eyes. She felt a love for him so strong that she couldn't take her eyes off of him. Hiccup felt the same way; he laughed with excitement as he saw the look on his wife's face. They looked into each other's eyes for what seemed like a lifetime before something abruptly slammed into Hiccup. Astrid gasped as she saw Hiccup slam into a tree; she had hardly noticed they had hit land, let alone a giant tree in front of them. She watched with terror as he fell through the branches. Toothless, who could not fly without his best friend, followed and disappeared into the deep green trees after Hiccup.

"Hiccup!" she called down to him.

She and Stormfly flew to the ground as fast as they could. She jumped off her dragon and fell onto the ground beside the limp figure in the dirt. She flipped him over and felt her heart drop as he left out a moan.

"Hiccup!" she cried, "are you okay?"

Hiccup's eyes opened as Astrid pulled a twig from his hair, "Fine. I guess I should have watched out for that tree."

Astrid nearly collapsed with the relief, "Okay, you are never doing that again."

Hiccup was about to argue but was cut off by Astrid's lips. He felt her run her fingers through his sweaty and dirt filled hair, he grabbed her waist and pulled her on top of him. Why had it felt so long since they were in each other's embrace? He heard her sigh in her throat as Hiccup pulled her closer and closer into him. He pulled off of her lips to attend to her bare neck; he kissed her softly on the collar bone.

"Hiccup..." Astrid sighed

"Astrid..." Hiccup smiled

"No, Hiccup!" Hiccup stopped when he heard the stress in her voice. He opened his eyes to see Astrid's staring off in the distance behind them. When he turned his head, he was surprised to find several spear heads right in front of his nose. When he looked around, he realized.

The two of them were surrounded by pirates.

* * *

><p>Hi everyone. First of all, thanks to all who like this story so far. Secondly, I am so sorry I has taken so long for the next chapter, it has been a very rough week for me for my grandfather had unexpectedly fallen sick, and unfortunately passed away just last night. I am heartbroken and am defiantly not doing so well, but I am still determined to get this story running. Lastly, I have decided to make this story set in the HTTYD 2 universe for many reasons: new character, new depth, character development, and an even better subplot. (sorry Stoick)

Like I said, pretty busy week coming up with the funeral and hosting family members, so I will try to get the next chapter posted by next week.

Thanks so much...please leave a review

Louise

PS: thanks so much to my beta and very dear friend Katie who is always offering to help whenever I ask, so big shout out to her.

4. Pirates

For years to come, neither Hiccup or Astrid had the slightest idea why the pirates hadn't noticed them laying in the tall grass. The men walked by them unknowingly. Astrid dug herself deep into the ground as feet passed her only a yard away. Hiccup did his best with half of his wife's weight on top of him. In minutes, the pirates had strolled

far away from them. Astrid brushed the branch away from her eyes to get a better look. There were at least fifteen men, the two watched as their bare feet passed unknowingly right before them. Hiccup's heart raced as the footsteps grew quieter.

"Astrid," Hiccup turned his head and whispered to her, "where are the dragons?"

The blonde pushed herself off her stomach and looked through the trees, "Stormfly!"

They waited for a reply, one did not come. Hiccup stood next to Astrid and called out for Toothless. Part of him didn't care if the pirates heard; if his best friend was in trouble he needed to help him. They exchanged worried glances before quietly racing behind the pirates tracks. The pirates could easily walk by two people, but two giant dragons? No, they needed to find them. Before the Pirates did.

Hiccup held up a hand signalling for Astrid to stop as he heard sudden noises. He pulled her by the arm to hide behind a tree and listened carefully.

"Quiet!" Hiccup and Astrid heard one man call. They held their breath as silence rang through the forest.

They heard a twig snap, and then the sound of feet shuffling once more, "I thought I heard somethin'" the man said in a scratchy voice, "must 'ave been the wind."

"Enough!"

The two jumped at the sudden boom of a new voice. Daringly, Astrid peaked out from behind the tree to get a closer look. They were hard to see through all the trees, but she could make out a couple large men. She quietly gasped when she saw the dark eyes of the leader. She hid herself quickly.

"What did you see?" Hiccup whispered into her hair.

She shushed him and returned to observing the scene playing out before her. The leader watched as the other men unpacked their belongings. She couldn't help but notice that the leader was the only one wearing shoes. She saw one chubby man wipe his eyebrow and approach the leader.

"Boss?" he said, "Might I ask you a question?"

The leader had no answer. Instead his dark eyes bored down into the other man's and made him gulp, he choked back a nervous laugh, "W-we were just wondering, not that it's important! But...didn't he say...n-not to come to Berk?"

The leader hardly reacted; instead he folded his arms behind his back and walked past the man with boredom

"Your stupidity never ceases to surprise me, Gumbo."

The other men laughed.

"Sir?" Gumbo asked.

The Leader, quite a few inches taller than Gumbo, looked down on him, "Look up to the sky, Gumbo. What do you see?"

Gumbo scratched his double chin and looked up, "Eh- rain clouds, sir?"

"Precisely. So that means?"

"Hmmm- Oh! That means a storm is coming!"

"You are on a roll, Gumbo. Now, why are we on Berk?" The leader asked.

Gumbo's shoulder slumped in confusion, and then he perked up and snapped his fingers, "To warn the Berkians about the storm!"

The leader stared down at Gumbo with blank eyes. Suddenly he raised his hand to backhand the chubby man, but suddenly lowered his arm and sighed; he looked to the other men, "Remind me to chop off Gumbo's hands when we return to the ships."

Gumbo frowned, but even his not so quick brain could figure out that his leader wasn't being serious.

Suddenly, Astrid felt Hiccup's chin close to her head, he must have been watching the event unfold as well.

The Leader suddenly stopped. He shushed the other men from their laughter and looked around.

Gumbo jumped with excitement, "See! I told you all I heard somethin!"

The Leader put his hand over Gumbo's mouth and looked around the woods. Astrid felt Hiccup squeeze her arm. She stretched her neck around to look at him but saw him looking off into the distance. Her eyes followed his stare until she saw Stormfly hopping along in the woods, going straight towards the Pirates.

"Stormfly!" she whispered as loud as she could, "no!"

"A Deadly Nadder!" One man yelled. The others immediately raised their swords at the sight of the dragon. Stormfly roared at the men and sent spine shots directly at them. Astrid felt Hiccup run off towards the men and she quickly followed.

"Stop!" he held his hands out.

"Don't hurt her!" Astrid immediately ran to Stormfly and stood in front of her. She reached down and grabbed a stick that looked just sharp enough to pierce someone's skin if it had to. She looked over to Hiccup, who had his flaming sword out and was shooing away the men.

"Seize him!" The leader called.

Hiccup lunged forward with his sword, scaring the charging men, "I am the Chief of Berk! I know who you are! Pirates. You have ten

seconds to pack up, and leave this island before I sentence each and every one of you by our law."

The leader laughed, "You? The Chief of Berk! I have never heard such nonsense."

"Ten... Nine...Eightâ€|" he counted.

Astrid felt her whole body seize up with anger as the men continued to laugh. She had the sudden urge to tear off the limbs of each of them. She was about to, but felt someone grab her arm. She gasped and turned around to find Gumbo, who looked even more frightening close up.

"Sorry, Ma'am!" he said through a mouth of missing teeth. Astrid watched Gumbo raise a club over her head, and everything went dark.

* * *

><p>For the first time in forever, Astrid noticed how much Hiccup did change. As the years go back, you often forget how much people grow. As they sat on the edge of a certain cliff, Astrid finally looked at him. When had he gotten so tall? When did he develop such cheek bones? When had a faint line of facial hair appear on his chin? She could get use to this, watching him change. One day he would get his first gray hair or a wrinkle under his eyes.

Hiccup finally had noticed her staring him down, he grinned, "What?"

"Nothing," Astrid sighed.

Astrid began to pull out weeds from the ground. Hiccup noticed this as well, "Really, Astrid, what's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong, justâ€|you're different."

"Different?" Hiccup asked, "How so?"

Uh oh Astird thought, What did I get myself into?

Her eyes fluttered from the ground to his, when she saw his blank stare her lip curled into a smile. She shook her head and laughed. Hiccup joined in, not quite sure what he was laughing at. Astrid then pushed Hiccup's hair away from his face and gave him a quick peck on the lips.

"What was that for?" Hiccup's eyes narrowed.

"I'm allowed to kiss you, Hiccup," Astrid said.

Hiccup laughed, "You usually have a reason."

When Astrid grew quiet again, Hiccup was seriously wondering what her problem was today. Hiccup eyed Toothless, who was lying next to Stormfly a few feet away and gave him a confused look. The dragon just rolled his eyes and curled back up.

_"You know Hiccup," Astrid began, feeling her face redden, "You've

never actually kissed me before."_

Hiccup stared at her, "But we just did-"

"No," Astrid said, "I kissed you. It's different."

Hiccup opened his mouth to say something, but nothing came out. He closed it.

"I- I suppose you're right."

It grew quiet once more. Hiccup also began to play with the grass. If he was a man, he would just grab her and kiss her already, instead his heart raced.

"Hiccup," Astrid scooted around so their knees touched, "I want you to kiss me."

"Uh-" Hiccup began to stutter, "I mean, if you- I guess."

"Hiccup," Astrid said softly, "Just kiss me already."

Very slowly, Hiccup reached up and brushed Astrid's blonde bangs away from her bright blue eyes. Hiccup looked her down, a sudden realization hit him that he was looking at the most beautiful woman in the entire world. He could see in her eyes that she was nervous too. They both took a moment to giggle before he softly nudged his nose against hers before his lips met hers. It felt so right. Just when Hiccup was about to pull away, he suddenly found some self-assurance and pressed his lips harder into hers.

* * *

><p>"Astrid! Astrid!" she heard a voice far away calling her name. She then felt a sudden lick across her face.<p>

Her eyes opened to see Stormfly nudging her. Her vision focused and she saw her husband looking over her as well. Astrid moaned as he helped her sit up, her head felt heavier than a Gronkle. She looked around, suddenly remembering what had happened. She looked around to see the campsite completely abandoned; all that was left was the smoke of the fire pit and a pair of socks hanging over it. Her hand went to her head and she felt sticky blood. She looked at her husband, who seemed to have a cut on his head as well.

"What happened?" she asked.

"They knocked you out," Hiccup fell onto his knees, and bit his lip, "... and then they knocked me out as well."

Astrid choked on her words, "They- they got away?"

Hiccup's eyes fluttered, "Damn it," he stood up and called out for Toothless once more. Still he was nowhere to be found. Astrid pushed herself off the ground. She could see the disappointment in Hiccup's eyes, she knew her husband, she knew he would be feeling guilty for letting the pirates escape. She felt anger on her own. She had heard tell-told tales of pirates: mean, vicious, daring, but surely one would never undermined a Chief?

"Why didn't they listen to you?" Astrid's hands fell into her lap, "I mean- you're Chief of Berk."

She heard Hiccup take a dramatic sigh, "Because I am not my father, Astrid."

They turned their head when a tussling noise came from the bushes to reveal a black scaly head and green eyes.

"Toothless!" Hiccup chased after the dragon and hugged him, "Where have you been! Never mind, we have to look for those men!" he looked to Astrid as he mounted Toothless, "are you alright to fly?"

Astrid, who was starting to get a very bad headache, lied, "yes."

* * *

><p>"What do you think?" Ekon asked as he presented his nest of Terrible Terrors. He had just recently built a pen for them, and the babies wrestled each other excitedly. All except Tara, who turned her back on the babies and shivered.<p>

Valka stepped over the pen and took the littlest one in her arms, "this is the sick one."

Ekon nodded his head. Valka stroked the dragon's head; it looked up to her with confused eyes. The little dragon immediately buried her face into her shirt. Ekon watched as Valka's face fell.

"Don't give me bad news," Ekon muttered, "Please. Just tell me what I can do to help her."

Valka sighed and carefully placed Tara into his arms. Ekon rocked the small dragon. He scrunched up his nose in deep thought. He felt Valka place a hand on his shoulder.

He gulped, "What do I do?"

Valka smiled down to him, "You hold herâ€|"

He shook his head, "what?"

Valka took the boys shoulders and lowered him down onto the bench, "You hold her, and tell her everything's going to be alright. Even if it's a lie. You keep her close and warm, you feed her more fish then she could ever dream and let her curl up by the fire."

"Then what?" Ekon searched her eyes.

"Then you let her go," Valka sighed.

Ekon's face went blank, and then realization swept over it in the appearance of shock, pain, disgust, and utter devastation. He looked down to Tara. The dragon did not have the energy she once did. Her power to fight was draining as quickly as the color of her scales. Ekon felt his eyes water as the dragon took slow breathes.

"No..." he cried.

"Ekonâ€¦" Valka's voice was soft.

"No!" he roared back, holding the dragon close, "you're wrong! Tara is going to be fine."

Valka backed away from the emotional boy. Ekon took a deep breath before returning his cold stare to Valka, "You're all wrong. You tell me that she won't survive, but you don't even know her! She may have it rough...but she...she is a fighter. She has to make it!"

Ekon lowered his head, "I did everything I was supposed to...what did I do wrong?"

Valka petted Tara's cold head, "You did everything right. There is absolutely nothing you could have done to avoid this situation. Sometimes the Gods work in strange ways. Tara was just not meant to be in this world for so long..."

Ekon sniffed, "how long does she have?"

"I would say...she will not make it through the cold winter. But until then, show her love."

Ekon sniffed again and held Tara close to his chest, "I should get her inside...There's a storm coming."

Valka watched the young boy enter his home. Just before he closed the door, he looked up and thanked her with teary eyes. She nodded. He closed the door. Valka crossed her arms as she walked through the village. Mothers were herding their children inside through the now wild wind. A few men were tying down baskets and other small, easily blown over things. She went to the forge to find Gobber packing up for the day.

Gobber caught her eyes and smiled, "Shouldn't you be tying up your dragons? Gods know those terrible terrors will blow away."

"The dragons can manage by themselves. They build confidence that way."

"And what about your son? Shouldn't someone be tying him down?"

Valka stared at him, "What do you mean? He hasn't returned yet?"

"No," Gobber took off his apron, "I haven't seen him all day."

"What about Astrid, have you seen her?"

"My guess she's with him. Don't you worry, they are smart. They probably found a nice cave to hold out the storm in. They used to do that a lot when they were teenagers, scared Stoick half to death."

Valka smiled sadly to the sky, "Wherever they are, I hope they are safe."

* * *

><p>Woah! Who were those guys? What were they doing on Berk?
What's up with the hiccstrid? AND POOR TARA! Guess we will have to
wait till next chapter... ;)
_

_Thanks for reading! _

5. Surprise

Chapter 5: Surprise

* * *

><p>They were gone for too long, Astrid worried as the sky around them turned dark. They knew a storm was on the way; Gothi had warned everyone a few days previous. The storm had not hit yet, but by the looks of the shattering waves and dragon-free skies, one was defiantly on the way. Hiccup and Astrid had searched the seas for the pirates for over an hour. Surely they should have caught up to them; they were on dragons and the pirates only had boats. But it was a pirate's job to hide out in sea, and they were gone.<p>

They decided to head home. At a glance, Astrid could tell Hiccup was upset with himself, and he was. It was his job to protect the villagers. He should have tied down those pirates and put them in prison. Hiccup only remembered pirates visiting Berk once in his life. He was a small boy when it happened, but he remembered how frightening his father looked when dealing with the smarmy pirates. It was the first time Hiccup had seen his father so cross. The greater portion of that day had been spent hiding out in Gobber's forge. He was supposed to be making his father proud; instead he felt a hint of disappointment.

Astrid was upset too, she heard the pirates laughing at him. At her. Was it because they were young? Or was it because Hiccup was so... well...lanky? Whatever the reason, she felt an intense anger burn through her stomach as they flew home.

Luckily for them, they just missed the storm on the way home. Astrid kept her eyes on Hiccup, who was still quite depressed about what had happened. The wind whipped through her hair as she pulled up beside her husband.

"Do you think they will come back?"

Astrid was afraid he wouldn't answer her but finally he raised his head, "No. Not after they got caught once, we will be prepared for the next time. I will be prepared."

She couldn't help but see his frustration. The young woman was confused to why she felt so angry. For some reason, she felt anger towards Hiccup. He blamed himself for everything; sometimes it got quite annoying. She clenched her fists.

His eyes moved to hers, "Let's just get back to town."

Just as they landed, the sun had gone down and the town was lit by candles and fires. It was a dark night. Astrid followed her husband's dark shadow into The Great Hall. Many stopped to stare at him and give him nods as he tore to the front of the room. Astrid wasn't sure

where he was going until she saw Gobber and Valka sitting at the front of the room. He marched up to their table and placed both hands on it.

"There you are, thought you would have been blown away from the storm." Gobber glanced back to Astrid, "you too seem mighty fine to me."

Astrid stood next to him, "Far from it."

Suddenly showing interest, Valka leaned forward in her chair, "What do you mean?"

Hiccup told them the whole story. Astrid was sure Gobber would blow up from anger. If there was anyone who hated pirates, it was Gobber. The honest man had always been blunt about paying on the barrel and fairness. Hiccup remembered the time he took Gobber's notebook without asking. He would never forget the spanking he had received from the man as punishment. Gobber always said thieving was the worst.

They watched as Gobber swigged down his remaining ale, "those sons of- we should go after those bloody excuses for men and make sure they never come back to Berk."

"Precisely," Hiccup sat down and grabbed a cup of mead, "but that's not all I heard."

Astrid's mouth fell open as she heard Hiccup's last words. She took a seat at the table to listen, "What do you mean, Hiccup?"

He looked around the table before saying, "Right before Gumbo- or whatever his name was- knocked me out. I heard the leader guy. He said to ready the ships, we head for Warheads. That's why- right after the storm- I am taking some men and flying out to Warhead's Island."

Astrid froze for a moment out of confusion. She tilted her head and spoke before Hiccup could continue, "I'm sorry, what? Why didn't you tell me they said that?"

Hiccup shrugged his shoulders, "I forgot until now."

"And- and now you are thinking about going to Warheads?"

"Yes."

"Okay." she leaned forward, "why on earth would you do that?"

Hiccup leaned forward in confusion as well, "I...why wouldn't I?"

"You said yourself they wouldn't come back after they had been caught."

"That doesn't mean we shouldn't go after them," Hiccup said.

"Yes it does," her voice lowered, "Why go looking for trouble?"

"That's still irrelevant," Hiccup raised an eyebrow at his wife, "If they are going after Warheads, it's my duty to go and help them."

Astrid laughed humorlessly, "You're not the Chief of Warheads, Hiccup."

Gobber and Valka exchanged looks at the fighting couple. They could tell both were getting heated. Hiccup's ears were turning red and Astrid looked pissed off.

"One," Hiccup held out a finger, "I'm the Chief of Berk, Astrid. And therefore, it's my duty to help other Chieftains. Two, if you recall, I signed a peace treaty with them, it kind of means I have to help keep the peace."

"Well if you recall, Hiccup, the last time we were there, they treated us like dragon dung and almost raped me."

The tables around them suddenly went quiet, hearing the conversation from the Chief and his wife. Hiccup's eyes widened and waited for the villagers to go back to their conversations before leaning into his wife, "Astrid. You need to stop."

"I need to stop?" Astrid spat, "can you hear yourself?"

"That's enough," Valka said. The couple and Gobber looked at Valka who had her hand clenched in a tight fist on the table, "that's enough from both of you."

Astrid stood from the table and marched out of the hall without another word. Hiccup watched her go with confused eyes before returning to his mother and Gobber.

"What on earth's gotten into you both?" Gobber asked, "I haven't seen the two of you fight like that since you were wee children."

Hiccup rubbed the bridge of his nose, "I have no idea. She just...blows up, once and awhile."

Valka stood from the table as well, "It's not all her, you know. And you two better stop whatever is going on, because I am too tired to listen to it."

Hiccup and Gobber watched in bewilderment as Valka left the table as well. Gobber shook his head.

"Women."

* * *

><p>No one had agreed to it by Astrid, and it was her idea in the first place. The storm had come, rain ripped down from the sky and splattered heavily over the arena. Snoutlout had nearly spit out his ale when Astrid told the gang that training was still on despite the storm. They were all soaked and the wind whipped through their clothes. The others watched with deep concern as Astrid eyes bore into Fishlegs' back as he threw his axe off target again.<p>

"No, Fishlegs," Astrid said, "Do it again."

Snoutlout butt in, "He's never going to get it! Astrid, this is ridiculous! Let's just call it a day!"

Astrid ignored him, she marched over to the target, dug the axe out of it, and practically threw it at Fishlegs, "Again."

The twins moaned. They looked to Hiccup, who was leaning against the brick wall, hiding his face from the pouring rain. Hiccup sensed their stares; he lifted his head and shrugged his shoulders.

"What do you want me to do?"

Snoutlout spit out some rain and confronted Hiccup, "Stop her."

Hiccup sighed, somehow he knew that this was a terrible idea. He gave Snoutlout a glare before striding past him. He marched up to Astrid, who was now scolding Fishlegs for the angle of his elbow.

"Astrid!" He said over the rain, "That's enough, we should stop."

Astrid merely glanced at him, "We are not going until Fishlegs learns how to throw an axe."

Hiccup looked at Fishlegs, he looked quite miserable in the pouring rain, "Fishlegs, go home. Lesson's over."

"No, Fishlegs. Don't move."

The young adults began packing up which made Astrid roar with anger, "I am in charge of this lesson! I am saying we are not leaving until Fishlegs-"

"I am in charge of this Academy, Astrid!" Hiccup roared back, "and I say we have done enough."

"Oh really?" Astrid stormed up to him, eyes flaring with anger, "Are you sure you have what it takes?"

Hiccup blinked at her comment. Never before had Astrid said something so snarky to him, he suddenly felt anger grow in him he had never felt before. His ears burned, and he leaned in so only she could hear him, "I think it's time you show me some respect."

Astrid, who was now turning red with anger, dropped the axe, which hardly echoed, "Excuse me?"

Hiccup eyed the others, who were sensing a fight. They quickly looked over an escape plan but realized the only exit was passed the fighting couple. Instead they simply remained quiet.

"You heard me!" Hiccup spat, "You walk over me like I am nothing!"

"I do not," she found herself stepping closer, "You are acting crazy."

Hiccup opened his mouth to argue, but Astrid didn't want to hear it; she whipped her head around and began storming out of the academy. She was furious. The ground was spinning; she felt heavy on her feet, and suddenly the world spun too fast.

"Astrid!" Hiccup roared

She spun around and blinked; she saw him, but she saw three of him!

"We are not done here!" Hiccup pointed at her and took a few steps towards her.

"Yes we are!" She shouted over the rain, she needed to lie down...

"This is what I am talking about!" Hiccup laughed humorlessly, "You never listen! You-" Hiccup stopped, his eyes widened as he saw Astrid sway.

Astrid grabbed onto a tall wooden box for support, but her body gave in, and she fell into darkness.

* * *

><p>Healer May's heart jumped out of her heart as the Chief kicked her door in. She almost screamed, but her mouth clamped shut at the sight of a pale woman in his arms, her head lolled on his shoulder. Hiccup shared a glance with her, and May immediately directed him to the bed in the corner. Hiccup gently set down his wife.
"What happened?" she asked as Fishlegs and Snoutlout entered the house. The twins thought it would be better to wait outside. They saw Astrid shiver.

"She just... fainted," Fishlegs glanced at Hiccup who was staring down at Astrid with a look of shock. May noticed and touched his arm, "Why don't you all wait in the kitchen. I will see what I can do. Hiccup was about to protest but May shoed the three men behind the curtain. May took a heavy sigh and started the examination. The men took a seat around the table and Hiccup tapped his fingers.

"How you doing over there, Hiccup?" Snotlout asked.

Hiccup just shook his head, "I pushed her too far. She hasn't been herself lately. All this-" he sighed, "all this marriage and chief stuff is getting to both of us."

"It's not your fault, Hiccup," Fishlegs patted his back, "I'm sure she will be fine."

About fifteen minutes later, Healer May ripped the curtains open, startling the three young men. May went to the counter and grabbed her cup of tea; pressing it to her lips she said, "You can go in now, Hiccup. She's awake." Something twinkled in May's eyes Hiccup did not recognize.

Hiccup bounded out of his chair without question and went into the room. He caught sight of a thankfully awake Astrid. She was sitting over the bed putting her shoes on. She looked as pale as a ghost. Hiccup looked down to her.

"Astrid?"

"Let's go home."

Hiccup fell back on his heels with shock as Astrid slowly sat up and walked out of the Healer's house. Without another word, he grabbed his coat and rushed behind her. They ran home through the weather. If she would let him, Hiccup would list ten reasons why Astrid should not be running through the storm. They rushed inside and closed the door behind him. Astrid sighed and sat down at their table. She couldn't stand the thought of Hiccup standing over her. Looking at her. But she also couldn't tell him in front of the others, this was private.

"Are you alright?" he asked innocently.

Her body stopped. She almost shivered at the words she was about to speak.

"Astrid- if there is-"

"I'm pregnant."

Her heart raced and she licked her dry lips. Astrid tried to keep herself under control, but she couldn't help it when a quiet sob escaped her; she buried her face in her hands. Still caught up in his confusion, it took Hiccup a second to process what she had just said. She watched as his eyes widened. She could see Hiccup's feet turn and he leaned onto the table, exhaling deeply. She felt a twinge of guilt flutter in her stomach. How could this happen? They weren't ready yet. They were not even ready to be married. Everything was tumbling out of control, and now they had something so delicate, so innocent to look out for.

In one swift movement, Hiccup was on his knees in front of her. He reached and grabbed her hands, holding them lovingly in his own. Astrid tried to close her eyes, she couldn't. She shook her head as tears rolled down her cheek.

"Look at me," his voice was low. She shook as she opened her eyes. She felt a waterfall of tears fall. He didn't speak until her eyes were on him. He squeezed her hands.

"I love you," he whispered, "I have loved you all my life and you know that." she choked down another sob and watched him swallow, trying to find his words, "And I know that the past couple of months have been complete Hell for you, but I love you and I swear to every god above... I will love this baby as much as I love you."

"Hiccup!" she sobbed, "You said it yourself. We are so...not ready. We don't even have time to put a stupid map together, how will we have time to raise a child? How- how can I raise a child!?"

Hiccup desperately looked into her eyes, "Astrid, I will take a leave of absence. My mother can take over for a bit or Snotlout. Heck, I will step down from my place as chief if that's what it takes."

"No!" Astrid sobbed, "You can't Hiccup! You are the Chief!"

"Fine...then I will take time off. Or at least, manage my schedule... I will try harder. I mean it," he felt his own eyes dampen, "I know we _were not_ expecting this, but we can make it work, I promise._ I promise_ we can do this."

Astrid shook his arms off her shoulders and stood away from him. She reached up with one hand and wiped her eyes, "I'm not ready to be a mother."

"I'm not ready to be a father, but I am willing to try." She heard Hiccup whisper.

Astrid took a shaky breath and turned around; she raised an eyebrow at him, "You really think we can do this?"

He huffed out a laugh and ran a hand through his hair, "Eh- sure! I mean, how hard can it be? Besides, Toothless can always help out, and Stormfly had babies; push comes to shove we always have the dragons."

Astrid shook her head and smiled, "Great, our child will be raised by dragons."

Hiccup's mouth curled into a smile and he laughed, "Poor kid."

"Hi-Hiccup-" he walked over to her and lifted her into a tight hug. She controlled her sobs and felt his warmth.

He grabbed her tear streaked cheeks and kissed her. She felt all the anger and stubbornness she felt over the past three months finally lift from her. This is what she wanted. She could do this As long as she had him. Together, they could do anything.

She broke the kiss and stated, "We-We're going to be parents."

He bit his trembling lip and felt a tear roll down his cheek, "You're going to be a mom. Gods, that sounds so weird."

She felt her eyes widen, "And you're going to be a father!" she repeated, "Gods help this baby."

They both laughed.

* * *

><p>WHAT? Were you expecting this? That's okay if you weren't, because Hiccup and Astrid weren't either... Leave a review telling me what you think, I love reading them. Next chapter is exciting, but the one after...ohhhhHH even more so. Something big's coming.

Lou

Chapter 6- Calm After the Storm

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Astrid both woke up in an exceptionally good mood the next morning. The storm had finally passed, and birds continued to sing outside the windows. The storm was not as bad as they had expected, and with only minimal damage to the Viking's properties, Hiccup had the morning off to spend with his wife. Astrid was also thankful she had not yet developed morning sickness. She remembered her mother telling her about how awful it was, but Astrid kept her fingers crossed so that she would not have to experience it. When Astrid woke up, she stretched and looked around. Her husband was not in bed. Astrid's lip curled into a smile when she smelled a burning but pleasant smell coming from downstairs. She got dressed and almost flew down the stairs, but remembered the news she got last night; she couldn't believe she was actually pregnant. She walked a little slower down the stairs. When she got to the bottom of the stairs, she saw Hiccup poking at the fire. She let out a laugh when she saw him burn his hand on a pan.<p>

"Son of a half troll!" Hiccup jumped around the room. Toothless stuck his head through the door and entered the home to see all the excitement.

"Need some help?" Astrid examined his cooking; it looked like he was making fish stew.

"No-no! I can do it! Why don't you just take a seat over there," Hiccup pointed to the table.

Astrid raised an eyebrow; this was going to be fun. For the next fifteen minutes she watched him throw spices into the pot and stick his tongue out as he carefully cut up the fish. Suddenly, Astrid felt hungry than she ever did in her life.

"Oh my gods Hiccup," she felt sweat pour from her lip and wiped it, "I'm starving! You almost done?"

Hiccup looked down to the pot with disappointment, "it's not cooking right." he turned to his dragon, "Toothless, a little help?"

The dragon looked up to his friend then to the pot; taking a deep breath, he sent a plasma blast at the pot. The house shook as the pot caught flame. Hiccup swore and backed away from it, trying to control the fire. Astrid took in her shock and tried to help him.

"Okay!" Hiccup coughed from the thick smoke, "Let's just go to The Hall for breakfast."

"Good idea," Astrid swiped a cloth over the smoke.

It only took a minute for the two of them to head out the door. Toothless and Stormfly playfully followed their friends, sending blasts to each other. Hiccup grabbed Astrid's hand and pulled her beside him. Astrid bit her lip; he still hadn't brought up the conversation from the previous night.

"Soâ€| Last nightâ€|" she said.

Hiccup walked a little slower, "yeah, crazy huh?"

Astrid nodded to him, "I still can't believe it."

"Can you...do you feel any different?" Hiccup asked her.

Astrid thought about it. Did she feel any different? Something about her was different, how else would the healer be able to tell she was with child? Everything over the past few months finally clicked. Stormfly had become very territorial. Toothless had become on edge as well. She felt intense anger towards her loved ones and was overall more emotional than she's ever been. And of course, with all the excitement, she forgot that the special gift she had gotten every month hadn't come. But she didn't feel any different. Her stomach was as flat as it always had been. She couldn't feel anything in there, was she supposed to? These were questions she would definitely be asking her mother once they released the news.

"I don't think soâ€|" Astrid said, "But I was thinking, we should probably just keep this between you and me for a while."

Hiccup shrugged his shoulders, "Fine by me."

Astrid was taken aback; it was surprising for them to agree on something so quickly.

"You've certainly changed," Astrid added, "in twenty-four hours."

Hiccup squeezed her hand and turned to her, "Yeah...I just- I feel so bad about what happened last night. I pushed the limits, I didn't know you were- you know. Yesterday was just such a crazy day, first with the pirates, and then you getting knocked out and then me yelling at you, I shouldn't have put you through all that stress."

"Hiccup," she said, "there was no way you could have known I was pregnant," she raised any eyebrow, "it sure was a surprise to me."

"Well, I want the next couple of months to run as smoothly as possible," he gestured with his hands, "Starting today. Astrid, if you really don't want me to go to Warheads, I won't go."

Astrid felt her heart gleam. He really did care. She held his cheek and gave him a peck on the lips, "it takes two to fight...if you really want to go, or feel like it's your duty, or whatever, then you should go."

Hiccup smiled lovingly at her, "Thank you, Mi'lady."

Astrid added, "But I'm going with you."

"What? No way!" Hiccup said, "You're pregnant, remember? It's too-it's too-"

"Dangerous?" Astrid finished his sentence and he nodded his head, "I will be careful. There's no way I'm letting you out of my sight. Those men could be dangerous."

"I'm not even sure if the pirates are still on Warheadsâ€|" Hiccup said.

"I know. I was talking about the Warheads," Astrid opened the door to The Great Hall.

Hiccup and Astrid sat at their usual table beside their friends. Almost nothing had changed, Ruffnut was asking Eret how he got his muscle definition, Snotlout and Fishlegs were arguing over Tara the Terrible Terror, and Tuffnut was stirring his porridge. Astrid almost leapt with joy when she saw the steaming porridge and honey sitting in front of her. She immediately grabbed her spoon and took a big mouthful.

"You certainly look better than last night," Fishlegs said mid sentence.

Astrid's mouth tightened and she exchanged a glance with Hiccup.

Eret brushed Ruffnut's hand away, "What happened last night?"

Astrid laughed nervously, "Oh nothing! Really, just a- I was just a little dehydrated, that's all."

Tuffnut snorted, "In the middle of a rainstorm? We were literally surrounded by water."

Astrid's eyes traveled to Hiccup's and he cleared his throat, "She's feeling much better now, so not much to worry about."

Thankfully, the conversation died down and Astrid mouthed a thank you to Hiccup. He winked back to her which made her feel giddy. She gladly returned to her porridge.

* * *

><p>When Ekon woke up that morning, he turned over in bed to look at Tara. He had made her a box to sleep in and covered it with soft blankets. She seemed peaceful enough, and Ekon was overjoyed she had survived the rough weather. He got out from bed and lifted the tiny dragon into his arms.<p>

"Hey little lady," he whispered.

She gave him a kind but goofy smile as he took him down the stairs. Ekon decided it was warm enough to take her outside, he grinned as the sunlight baked their skin. His mother was putting hanging clothes up to dry.

"Morning, mom!" Ekon said happily.

Ingrid turned and smiled, "Good morning, honey. How's Tanya?"

"Tara-" Ekon corrected her.

"Oh sorry, dear. How is Tara?" she held a clothes pin in her mouth,

"Better, I think. She wasn't scared at all of the storm last night. I thought for sure she would be up all night crying."

Ingrid laughed, "Well, maybe she is as strong as you believe."

Ekon smiled at her but jumped in surprise as the little dragon leaped out of his arms. He watched in shock as she spread her little wings and flew only a foot off the ground. She hovered for a moment and looked at Ekon who had wide eyes. She was flying! Sure, it was only a foot off the ground, but she was flying! His happiness turned to shock once more as she ran down the hill away from him.

"Hey! Tara!" Ekon chased after her, she sure was fast. He raced down the hill into the village following the little red dragon as fast as he could. He saw her little body crawl under the feet of many Viking men and Ekon almost fainted with worry- one wrong step from the four hundred pound men and Tara would be crushed. He roughly pushed himself through the crowd and passed another house. He ran into something with an oof and fell backwards. He grunted and looked up to see a shocked Valka, who was holding Tara in her arms. Ekon lifted himself off the ground and smiled to the women. Valka looked down to the smiling boy with shock.

"She's flying," he laughed, "she's flying all by herself! I told you she would get better!"

"I can't believe it..." Valka said, "She's one stubborn dragon."

"So you think she will get better? Do you think she will make it through the winter?" he said quite seriously.

Valka took a sharp breath and looked down at the boy, "Who knows? If she keeps progressing like this, it's a possibility."

* * *

><p>It was the perfect day to go riding. The sun was blindingly bright and reflected perfectly off of the wave-less sea below. So maybe the sun got in their eyes, thus causing Barf and Belch to knock heads repeatedly, but overall it was a gorgeous day. The sun had even worked its magic on the residents and dragons. Even Astrid and Hiccup seemed to be back to a normal amount of teasing and joking. Eret noticed them seeking small glances at each other and grinning. Something had obviously happened last night, but it wasn't his place to ask.

Eret had been unsure of Berk when he had first arrived. It was at the same time that he lost everything he had ever known, and all he had were a few eccentric young adults who called themselves 'dragon trainers'. The dragons were surprisingly easy to get used to; after all, he had considered himself the world's best dragon trapper. But that was all before, and his after was a whirlwind of new faces, new land and strange customs that all seemed to have been named by someone who had had a bit too much mead. Now he simply accepted that everyone in Berk was at least a little bit mad, and nothing could change that.

The maddest of all might be Ruffnut, thought Eret, as the young woman in question flew overhead, blowing kisses in his general direction.

"Hey there, Studley." Ruffnut said while flying both arms into the air in some kind of full body greeting and sliding backwards off of her dragon. Eret leaned over to look past Skullcrusher's wings to see Barf and Belch pulling the dazed looking girl back up in the air. Snotlout and Fishlegs were laughing so hard that Eret was surprised that they didn't fall off of their dragons as well. Hiccup and Astrid tried to be the mature adults, but neither of them could help cracking a couple of smiles. Tuffnut could be heard swearing and muttering under his breath about his sister and 'her infernal crush'. Eret just sighed. He had long ago realised that this kind of nonsense was to be expected.

The shenanigans were almost appreciated at this point. Everyone in Berk knew about what had happened in the Warheads camp, and Hiccup and Astrid's stress had extended throughout the chiefdom. After the pirates were seen in the woods, everyone had begun to prepare; for what, Eret wasn't sure. He overheard Gobber mention that people were acting like they did back when dragons were their nemeses. Even the storm had put the Berkians on edge; a nice, sunny day was exactly the thing they needed.

A group of islands were becoming clearer as they raced towards them, revealing tall, thin bodies of land covered in shining orange trees. Eret felt that he had been there before, but he had been so many places and this one didn't seem to stick out. Dragon wrangling had taken him to the ends of the earth, and after a while places started to blur together, eventually being completely forgotten.

"Hey Eret!" Hiccup shouted, "Remember this place?"

"Uh, it seems familiar..." he replied as he wracked his brain for any specific memories of the area, "Should I know this place?"

"How could you forget our first meeting? I mean, you only tried to steal my dragon and kill me... but I guess that that wouldn't be all that memorable."

"Wait- it can't be! I didn't even recognize it from a dragon's eye view."

"What is this place anyway?" Snotlout butt in, "I don't think I've ever been here."

"Oh! I remember!" Fishlegs said, "We flew over here on our little rescue mission for Hiccup and Astrid."

"What is this place called anyway?" Tuffnut asked.

"Itchy Armpit." Hiccup replied.

Everyone stared at him_. I thought that the Berkian holidays had strange names_ Eret thought.

"Toothless named it." Hiccup stated, as though it was a completely acceptable answer. And apparently it was; no one questioned him further.

The rest of the beautiful afternoon was spent racing between Itchy Armpit's steep cliffs and climbing its strange trees that smelled

vaguely of cinnamon candle wax. The seven of them took turns naming the little islands after combinations of body parts and actions. Tuffnut named the tallest one Farting Kneecap and Ruffnut named the widest Falling Elbow. Someone had even named a huge cliff Breathing Toenail, though no one could agree on whose idea it was.

Eret still didn't know if he would ever feel completely at home in Berk, but he knew that at least he could always count on its residents. This afternoon was a break from their duties; a time when the young adults could go back to being children again and pretend that their problems weren't there. They were all foolish and crazy, but it was only because it was the one time that they could get away with it. It had been too long since they had all gone riding together. Eret thought that he might start suggesting another group ride the next time that everyone started going crazy. Yes, even when Berk was in fear of an attack you could always rely on the Vikings... and their dragons.

As the sun set, the gang finally decided to head home. As they landed on Berk, they all had wide smiles and were exhausted by the day's activities. They dismounted their dragons and tossed fish into their mouths. Astrid couldn't seem to keep a smile off her face. Life was finally getting back to normal, and even though she knew a baby was on the way, she also knew it would be at least a month before she even started to show. She decided to enjoy these moments while they lasted.

"Alright, I'm up for drinks, anyone else?" Snotlout wiped the slime from his hands.

"I'm in," Fishlegs said

"Us to," Tuff and Ruff agreed and Eret just whooped excitedly.

"I think we are going to call it a night," Hiccup wrapped his arm around Astrid's neck and placed his head on her shoulder, "What do you think dear?"

Astrid almost let on a laugh. Dear? What had gotten into him? It took her a moment to realize this was yet another cover up.

"Oh! Yeah...we- we've had enough for tonight."

Snotlout just laughed, "Gods, marriage makes people so old. I'm never getting married."

"I don't think that will be an issue, Lout," Fishlegs added and they laughed.

All of a sudden, a terrible terror had dropped onto Hiccup's shoulder making him jump. They watched as the terrible terror stuck out his leg revealing a note. Hiccups made a confused face as he unraveled it and pet the dragon on the head.

We have been attacked. The pirates pillaged everything. Please come, they will be back in three days to take more prisoners. Please Hooligans, you are our only hope.

PS. Come by boat. The pirates are taking the dragons as well.

Roren

Hiccup crumpled the paper in his hands and his friends gave him worried looks.

"What is it, Hiccup?" Astrid asked

"Ready the ships," he spoke to Eret, "We are going to Warheads."

* * *

><p>That was a fun chapter. Credits to my friend Katie for writing the flying sequence with the gang. She really loves Eret! And Studley? I laughed.

Next Chapter: Looks like the gang is heading to Warheads.

7. Shot

Chapter Seven- Shot

* * *

><p>It took one night and a full day for them to reach Warheads. The gang watched as men fell out of the ships and onto the docks. It was night, and the island was lit by torches. Luckily, the moon and stars shone brightly above them. Terrified screams filled the air. Astrid watched as her mother jumped off of the ship, she was holding medicine supplies.<p>

"Stay safe. Both of you." she gestured to Hiccup as well.

Hiccup sighed and looked to Fishlegs, "What exactly are we up against?"

"It's a raid; we should get women and children away. We do whatever we can to help the Warheads. If we can isolate the pirates, maybe we can take them down."

Astrid shook her head. She looked around; she saw women and children whispering. Some of the younger kids stared at her like nothing was happening at all. She looked at a young mother, who was rocking a silent baby. She felt the mother's eyes burn into her. It was like she was trying to warn Astrid of something.

As her mother left, Astrid grabbed Hiccup's arm, "Hiccup, something doesn't feel right."

Hiccup's eyes widened, "What? Are you okay?"

"What? No-" Astrid slapped away his concerned embrace, "No, I mean...They're just so... calm."

"What do you mean?"

"They are all just wandering around like they are lost. No one's panicking, and where are the Warhead Warriors? I mean, all I see is Berkians and where is that Gods- awful Chief Roren? It does not make

sense, I mean; they are the Warheads. Why would they call us for help when nothing is happening here?"

"Those are some very good questions," Hiccup's eyebrows knit together, "And we are going to find out," he paused, "Astrid, I think you should stay in the boat."

Astrid frowned, "There's no time for arguing right now, Hiccup. These people need as much help as they can get."

"I would just feel better if you stayed here."

"And I would feel better if you trusted me. I'll be careful, I promise."

Just then, a loud horn began to ring. Hiccup and Astrid jumped at the noise of it; they turned around to see they were being charged at by pirates from all directions.

"RUN!"

"Hiccup!" Astrid called as she got caught up in the crowd. As much as she wanted to find her husband, she knew that she needed to act quickly. She kept one hand on her axe as she rushed through the now panicking Warheads. Astrid managed to rip one man off of a child and punch him square in the nose, knocking him out.

"Help me!"

Astrid's head whipped around to see a young girl that looked just about five. She was standing at the top of the hill as her mother was being taken away by some raiders. Astrid raced up the hill, but by the time she got there the child's mother had been rounded up by the raiders and chained. She cried out for her daughter who was screaming.

"Mama!" the little girl raced after the raiders, Astrid grabbed the girl by her shoulders, "Mama! Let me go! MAMA!"

Astrid held the girl tightly by the arm, she couldn't chase after the men with a child by her side.

"Look at me!" Astrid got to her knees and held the child's small face; she stopped sobbing for a moment to listen to Astrid.

"I'll go get your Mama, but you have to stay here. Don't move at all, okay?"

She nodded and sobbed, "Save Mama!"

Astrid let go of the child and ran towards the men. One man had now pushed the mother onto the ground and was laughing. He stopped as he saw Astrid take out her axe.

"Let her go," she said in a dangerous voice.

The man held the chain with one hand and ripped out his sword with another.

"Trust me; you're making a big mistake. What would you rather, that

women, or your life?"

The young woman heaved her axe behind her shoulder and threw it at the man's foot. It dug into him with a slicing nose and he cried out with pain and fell to the ground. Astrid marched over to him and grabbed the robes out of his hands.

"I don't have time for this!" Astrid spat at the man. He cursed at her. Astrid untied the woman and watched as she ran to her daughter. The young girl wept and was lifted into the mother's arms. The two left Astrid without even a thank you.

Astrid shook her head and looked down to the man who was trying his best to crawl away from Astrid. She ripped the axe out of his foot making him cry out more. His cries soon fell silent as Astrid placed the axe to his throat.

"Tell me," she spoke harshly, "who are you? What are your men up to?"

"Please don't kill me!" the man cried.

"Just answer the question."

"He sent for us! He told us to!" the man cried, "Oh, my foot is ruined! You'll have to chop off my whole leg!"

"Who sent you!?" Astrid bellowed making the man yelp with fright.

"Roren!"

Astrid looked at him with shock and couldn't believe the words that had just come from his mouth. Her mind was littered with thoughts as she looked down to the frightened man. How could it be? Why would Roren tell pirates to invade his own land? Why would Roren call for the Hooligans? Every thought and every scenario that went through Astrid's head was like nails on a chalkboard. She needed to get to Hiccup. She needed to tell him what she just heard.

She yelped as something suddenly wrapped around her neck. Two hands. Two large, filthy hands. Before she knew it, she had been flipped over on her back and was face to face with him. Her face crippled in shock as she recognized him.

"You!" she coughed.

The dirty face and missing teeth made him recognizable. It was her same attacker as before. He gave her a disgusting smile and squeezed his hands tighter around her neck. Astrid tried to fight him, but after only moments of being withheld from breath, her arms and legs fell to the earth, losing all of the strength they ever had. She saw dark spots and she struggled for even the faintest bit of air.

It was the most difficult thing to describe; pain filled her from her head to her toes as she screamed in her mind for air. She tried so hard to breathe but nothing filled her lungs but hatred and fright. She felt like screaming out and crying if she could. It seemed to take forever, and Astrid was not sure if the pain would go on forever or if she would slip away in the evil man's arms. She thought about

her baby. The small but powerful thing growing inside of her that would die before it developed hands and feet. She couldn't die in the hands of this man. Not after the battle with Drago or the Green Death or even the small wars against dragons. She refused to die in such a dishonorable way, but it seemed life didn't care. As she got lost in her thoughts, she barely heard the man whisper to her.

"Guess you should have stayed in the kitchen where you belong."

Suddenly she could breathe. She gulped air down and coughed. She fell onto the ground as air filled her lungs. It tasted better than anything she could have possibly have imagined. She opened her eyes and saw Hiccup on top of the man with wild eyes. She felt overjoyed at the look of fright on her attacker's face.

"Actually, she doesn't," Hiccup said, "Believe me, I have tasted her cooking. As for you, you belong in the ground!"

Hiccup lifted his hand and punched him square on the nose. The man's body went limp and Hiccup cursed at his bruised hand. He untangled himself from the limp man and immediately went to Astrid.

"Oh my gods! Astrid?"

She coughed as he lifted her into a sitting position. She couldn't hold herself up, she fell onto his shoulder. The world was still a blur to her. Hiccup struggled to lift her into his arms and raise them both from the ground. He searched around the battlefield to find it almost empty. His attention turned to the great hall and he gasped. The building had been set on fire and he heard screams coming from it. His head spun; what should he do? Thankfully, he spotted Eret running up to them.

"Bloody Hell," Eret murmured to Hiccup, "What happened?"

Hiccup said nothing. He carefully shifted Astrid's weight into Eret's arms, "Get Astrid help! She can't breathe- she was attacked. Just make sure she is okay, alright?"

"Okay!" Eret said. He ran in the opposite direction.

"Goodâ€¦!" Hiccup said back and swallowed dryly, "and Eret?"

"Yeah, Chief?" Eret turned to him.

Hiccup looked lovingly to his wife. She was wheezing and coughing. He should never have let her come. He said in a shaky voice, "She's pregnant."

"Okay got it!" Eret suddenly stopped, "Wait what!?"

Before Eret could question Hiccup, the lanky man was already running full speed towards the burning building. Eret cursed over and over. He looked down to Astrid, "Thor Almighty."

Hiccup was in shock as he saw the magnificent hall burning in flames. The once large and beautiful white building was now collapsing at an alarming rate. Audible snaps came from the wood. Many men and women pushed themselves out of the way of the burning building. Hiccup

pushed his way through the crazed people and closer to the flames. He coughed; there were still people in there! He heard screams for help coming from the stairs and before he knew it, he was pulling himself up by the banister.

* * *

><p>Ingrid's eyes filled with shock as she saw Eret carrying her daughter towards her. Ingrid was brought to help with the injured; Healer May was busy back in Berk after a little boy had broken his leg falling from a barn roof. Ingrid didn't mind being called out to help; she was an old warrior, and if she had to, she could fight. But now when she saw her daughter's limp body in the man's arms, hundreds of possibilities ran through her mind. Her daughter could be hurt, or Gods forbid, dead. Her feet carried her to them as fast as she could. Eret let go of Astrid, and Ingrid was very happy to find a coughing, but living, Astrid. She pushed him away and searched for something with wild eyes.<p>

"What happened to you?" Ingrid put her hand on Astrid's cheek. She was quite surprised when Astrid pushed her mother away.

"Not now." she pleaded, "Where's Hiccup?"

Astrid looked to Eret to see his eyes set on something off in the distance. He had a look of pure terror. Both Hoffersons whipped around and Astrid gasped in shock. She saw the Great hall, burning in flames. A sudden thought pierced through her like ice. Hiccup was the type of person who was stupid enough to run into a burning building. As long as there was someone to save, he would do anything.

"Tell me he's not in there," Astrid saw Eret's terrified look. She ran towards the building but was pulled back by Eret.

"No, Astrid! You can't!" Eret held her tightly.

"Let go of me!" her eyes never left the flaming building, "I need to help him! LET GO!"

Eret looked around for help. He saw Ruffnut and Tuffnut watching the flames from a distance with awe. He called for them.

"Tuffnut! Ruffnut!"

The male twin walked casually up to Eret, "what's up?"

Eret couldn't believe how calm the twins were. He struggled to keep Astrid in his arms, "Go help Hiccup!" he pointed with his eyes towards the burning building.

Tuffnut looked to the burning building then back at Eret, "You want me to risk my life and go into a burning building that might collapse at any minute?"

Eret almost lost Astrid as she roared with anger, he spat at Tuffnut, "Just go!"

"No way! I-okay fine," Tuffnut jogged away.

"Don't touch the flames this time, idiot!" Ruffnut called after her

brother. She raised an eyebrow realizing her arm was touching Eret's.

This was Astrid's chance. In one quick movement she twisted herself out of Eret's tight hold. She huffed with anger and turned to him, "You idiot! You just sent that mutton head to go help my husband. We are all doomed now."

"Hey watch it!" Ruffnut said, "That mutton head is my twin."

After a few minutes of Astrid pulling at her braid with fear, Snotlout and Fishlegs came running up to them. Snotlout laughed and slapped Eret on the back, "Man! I love a good raid! I can finally kick someone's--"

The two men noticed the tenseness.

"What's going on?" Fishlegs asked.

SNAP. They all stopped as they turned to watch in horror. They stretched their necks up to see the roof of the great hall collapse. It fell inwards, and terrified screams came from inside. Astrid couldn't move. Her eyes lit with flames as the building toppled into itself.

She suddenly screamed in pain and toppled over. Something sharp pierced through her skin and she felt arms around her. She felt blood pool around her. She heard her mother and Eret gasp. She couldn't understand what was happening to her. All she could think of Hiccup. All she could do was pray that he made it out in time. All she could do was beg the gods as she slipped into darkness.

* * *

><p>The room was cold. Her toes felt like icicles and her body shivered. Without even opening her eyes, she could tell that she was naked. Covered only by a thin white sheet, she felt something damp dab across her forehead. She desperately wanted to open her eyes but they felt heavier than a dragon. After what felt like hours of just existing in darkness, her eyes fluttered open. She was in her bedroom. Her old bedroom. She looked around to see all of her childhood things still placed where she had left them the day she married Hiccup.<p>

Astrid pushed herself up but cried out with pain. She looked to her left shoulder to see it bandaged up with a faint spot of blood. She breathed deeply and pushed herself up. The door opened quietly and Astrid turned over to see her mother in the doorway holding a bucket of water. Her mother looked tired, her hair was unwashed and there was darkness under her eyes. The older woman stopped with a look of pure sadness as she placed the bucket on the bedside table and sat in the chair next to Astrid's bed.

Astrid swallowed nervously and looked to her mother.

"What happened?" her voice was like sand paper.

"You were shot by an arrow," her mother had a voice of anger, "A clean shot through the shoulder. You should be fine."

"Where's Hiccup?" Astrid said. She watched as her mother dipped a cloth into the water and squeezed it dry.

"The baby is fine too," Ingrid murmured, Astrid watched her hesitantly, "Eret told me. I just wish you had told me before..."

Astrid didn't have time for mother and daughter talk, "Mom, where's Hiccup?"

"You will be bedridden for a few more days. But nothing we can't handle."

Astrid couldn't take her mother's avoidance. Her hand flew out to the right and slapped the bucket to the floor. It fell with a satisfying clang and water soaked her floor. Ingrid stepped back in shock and could do nothing but stare at her daughter in surprise. Astrid's breathing increased.

"Astrid, dear..."

"Tell me the truth!" Astrid cried. "Where is he?"

Ingrid swallowed, closed her eyes, and reopened them to look directly into her daughter's.

"He's dead. Hiccup is dead."

* * *

><p>Defiantly not the end. Now the real story begins.
_

I can't believe Hiccup is dead...or is he...

hmmm

Leave a Review!

8. Grief

Chapter 8- Grief

* * *

><p>"Astrid? Astrid honey, please say something."<p>

It had been more than five minutes since Astrid had heard the news, but she was still frozen in place. Her hands clung to her blankets as thoughts zoomed through her mind. Hiccup couldn't be dead, there was no possible way. Sure, he had almost died battling the Green Death, and that time Drago almost froze him to death. There was even that time he ate a nasty bowl of fish stew, but there was no possible way he could be dead. What about Berk? With their Chief dead, who would take the responsibility of becoming chief? Would it be her? Could she even do that? Of course not, that was Hiccup's thing. She did not want to lead, attend meetings and perform ceremonies. She was no leader; she was a fighter. It had slipped Astrid's mind that young people could even die at all. Even if they did, these things couldn't happen to him, to them. Hiccup and Astrid were supposed to attend

funerals for other people, not each other. Hiccup was supposed to be there for her, for the baby. A sudden thought made Astrid freeze; she was still pregnant with his child. The child had lost his or her father before even coming into the world. The child she was not even ready to have.

Her body jolted as her mother's hand stroked her cheek. Astrid roughly pushed her hand away and rose from the bed. She gasped with a pain that was both physical and emotional. Sudden sobs erupted from her as she pushed her mother out of the room. Ingrid pleaded her daughter to let her stay but she slammed the door. Her breathing became rushed and shallow as she slid down the door frame, trying to force the tears to stay in her eyes. She buried her mouth into her arms, trying to stop the waves of emotions.

Hiccup is dead she thought, _Hiccup is dead. He is gone, gone, gone, _

A sudden hole ripped through her heart as those words played over and over again.

Astrid allowed herself to take three more sobbing breaths before attempting to gain control. Every time she thought it was over, another cry would escape her. She crawled to the bed on her knees; she grabbed her pillow and pulled it into her arms tightly. Her vision went blurry as the tears continued to roll down her cheeks. No matter how many times she tried, the shaky sobs of emotion escaped from her. But suddenly it stopped. She fell onto her back holding the pillow.

Astrid painfully lifted herself up from the ground and fell back onto the bed. With her good arm, she lifted the blankets up and covered herself with warmth. She brushed her arm across her eyes, wiping the tears away. As her lip trembled, she reached up with her hand and put it on her stomach. Right on her navel, she felt the tiniest of bump that wasn't there the previous day. She rubbed her hand back and forth, feeling the rise and drop of her stomach.

"You promised," she heard her own voice say; "You promised you would be here."

* * *

><p>When Ekon's mother and sister returned from the Warheads, everyone was panicked. Ekon remembered the ships dock. Men were jumping off of the sides of the ships and yelling orders. Returning ships were always in a bit of disorder, but the panic that emitted from the crewmen made it evident that their voyage hadn't gone as planned. He had placed Tara in her nest before running down to the docks to see his mother. Ekon was surprised when many men rushing past him, and he caught word of someone dying. He heard about a burning building. He heard that something had happened to the Chief. Ekon's heart raced as he searched for any sight of his sister or mother. Very suddenly, two large men carrying a stretcher passed them, and Ekon gasped. In the cloth stretcher was his sister. She was unconscious and bloody. Something that looked like a rough arrowhead was lodged in her shoulder. The blood around it had begun to dry, but it had already seeped into her clothes, staining them a deep red.<p>

"Astrid?" his face hardened with fear. Suddenly a hand was on his shoulder. He looked up to see Gobber. He knew the man, but they weren't exactly best friends. Ekon knew the older man had been a friend of Hiccup's father. He knew Gobber practically raised Hiccup and was good friends with his sister, but Ekon was never part of his sister's group, so he never really spoke with Gobber much. He was surprised to see his mother run past him without so much as a glance to chase after her daughter. Ekon looked up to Gobber in shock.

"What happened?"

"I'm not sure lad, just wait until Hiccup gets here. I'm sure he has the answers."

That was when word started to spread. Slowly but surely, the town was notified of what happened. Ekon couldn't believe it when he heard it. Hiccup was dead. He and Tuffnut were both gone, lost in the fires of The Great Hall. Berk had no Chief, The information piled on him like heavy weights and he fell into the grass. This was impossible, Hiccup couldn't be dead. Who would lead Berk? Train the dragons? Take care of Tara if she got sick again? Ekon lifted his head to see Gobber. He had just gotten the news, and was turning a pale color. The older man locked himself away in his workshop for a long time.

Ekon wanted Valka. He wanted to talk to her, he hated the fact she didn't know her son was dead. Valka was known to take off for long flights. She would have the shock of her life when she returned home...Ekon couldn't think of that.

For the next couple of weeks, he took care of his mother, Tara and the house. His mother would spend hours sitting at Astrid's bedside as she slept. Ekon was scared to go near Astrid; he didn't want to see her like this. He remembered the morning Astrid came to; he remembered waking up in his bed to hear her cries and sobs from her bedroom across the hall. He remembered hearing her mother bang at his sister's door, begging to be let back in. He remembered covering his ears to get away from it.

Astrid wasn't getting any better. Ekon knew she was having a baby, his mother had sat him down and told him one night. It was odd to think about. He was going to be an uncle, which would be pretty cool if Astrid wasn't heartbroken over the loss of Hiccup. She was not taking care of herself. He watched their mother sit outside of Astrid's bedroom door, making sure she was okay. He often woke his mother up from the chair and helped her to her bed.

Then there was the part Ekon dreaded. With everything that happened, the streets of Berk were lifeless. No one wanted to come out of their homes, no one wanted to go flying or drink mead until the risk of war had passed. One night, Ekon slipped out of his bed to watch a council meeting. He peeked his head into the Great hall. Almost every seat was taken, except for Hiccup's. They seemed to avoid that large centered chair like it was the plague, no one would even look at it.

"It's only fair," Spitelout spat, "With Hiccup gone, and no other blood relatives, that means my son will become the Chief. Stoick and I had decided that many years before the boy could even prove himself."

"Really, Spittleout! I don't see any papers sayin' that!" Another man called.

"Yeah, we should decide another way."

The arguing grew louder. It was suddenly stopped by Gobber's roar, "Listen to yourselves!"

The room grew quiet, they looked to the old man who was close to tears, he took a deep breath, "Hiccup is dead."

It grew quieter. Not a peep was heard.

"The boy who saved us. Showed us the way of the dragons. Changed our lives forever! You lot are shaming his memory by doing this!" his voice finally cracked and he lowered his head, "Shaming it, I tell ya."

A voice was heard from the crowd, "What do you suppose we should do, Gobber?"

"Yeah, you were closest to the Chief, you should decide."

Gobber raised his head, "In the time being, Astrid will be put into leadership."

"The Hofferson girl?" Spitelout said.

Gobber gave him a sharp look, "She's the most capable. She was his wife. She holds the Haddock name."

"Well, she can't stay Chief forever," Spitelout said, "She needs a replacement, if you catch my drift."

"I didn't finish," Gobber swallowed, "She will be active Chief until Valka returns from her journey. Valka will decide who becomes the next Chief. It's only right, she is the closest thing to Haddock blood we will ever get."

Ekon suddenly gasped at a light tousel in the trees. He turned, it was dark, some light shed out from the hall creating shadows. He looked at the bushes, they were rattling. His ears suddenly twitched at a sound. It was a cry. Almost like a moan that echoed through the night. Ekon followed it. His heart quickened as the cries came from the edge of the woods. What he saw made him freeze with terror. He was looking into the eyes of a dragon.

A Night Fury.

The dragon looked so lost, so frightened. His green eyes were almost glowing in the night. He looked skinnier, like he hadn't been fed. It had been three weeks since Hiccup's death. With all that was happening, no one had even noticed the dragon was missing. When the ships returned, Toothless must of ran around looking for Hiccup. Although he never would be found. No one had tried to comfort the dragon, they did not even know he was missing. Ekon took a step to the dragon. But he hissed. With a sudden flap of his wings, he ran into the forest, disappearing into the night.

* * *

><p>Astrid woke up that morning feeling incredibly sick. She looked out her bedroom window; her mother must have come in earlier and opened the blinds. It was almost too bright in the room as she shielded her eyes from the rays. A sudden knock came from the door.<p>

"Go away," she moaned, "I'm not hungry right now, mom."

Astrid was surprised as the door opened. It was Ekon, standing there with his shaggy brown hair and worried eyes. He had Tara in his hands, shivering and licking the younger boy's shirt. The boy swallowed nervously; he hadn't seen his sister in a very long time. They weren't overly close, with such an age Astrid was usually out of the house with her older friends. They shared different talents, interests and hobbies. Astrid getting married was a big part of it too, she hardly had time to see her younger brother any more.

He forced himself to say something, "hey."

"Heyâ€|" Astrid responded, her voice was weak and she was white as a ghost.

Ekon grew nervous. He looked down to Tara and watched as she tried to crawl up his arm. He petted her lovingly.

"I'm sorry he died." Ekon whispered, "it...sucks."

That was stupid to say. He looked up to see Astrid pause for a moment, before taking a breath, "Yeah, it does suck."

"You're having a baby," Ekon avoided looking at her stomach and settled his eyes on Tara.

"I am."

"Cool."

Astrid reached out to pet Tara. He almost flinched as her hand gently stroked the dragon's head. He gave Astrid a smile and she smiled back.

Astrid jumped in shock as the door flew open to reveal her mother with a bowl of porridge. The younger woman saw the look of shock on her mother's face.

"Ekon," she scowled, "I told you not to bug your sister."

Astrid felt her body shake at the smell of food. She felt her throat tighten before leaning over the bed and puking. Her mother was quick; she grabbed the bucket once used for water and stuffed it under her daughter's chin. Ekon jumped off the bed and into the corner of the room.

"Get her some water, Ekon. Quickly now, go on."

Ekon looked at his sister one last time before exiting the room. Astrid emptied her stomach into the bucket as her mother massaged her back. When she finished, her mother took the bucket out of the

room.

"That was awful," Astrid said after a while.

Her mother smiled, she sat on the corner of the bed and folded her arms, "That was morning sickness. Looks like it finally hit you."

Astrid pulled her robe tighter, a sudden chill coming, "I thought I would be immune."

Her mother let out a laugh. They sat for a moment in silence, listening to the terrible terrors sing from the window. They seemed peaceful. Fall was in the air, Berk was covered in orange leaves that fell from the forest into the village. Of course, Astrid hadn't been able to enjoy fall like she usually did. Very quickly, Ingrid took Astrid's hand softly in her own. Astrid's eyes traveled up to her mothers.

"I'm so sorry," Ingrid choked, "I would of never have wished for this to happen. If I could change it, I would. If I could trade my life for his, I would."

Astrid shook her head, "Mom..."

"But I cannot grow old watching you waste away to nothing in this bed. I can't let my grandchild come into the world like this. I think it's time to open the windows and get out of bed. I think that's what he would want you to do."

Ekon suddenly entered the room once more, Terrible Terror on his shoulder and cup in his hands, "I agree with mom. I miss my axe fighting, brave, sarcastic sister."

Ingrid nodded and squeezed Astrid's hands, "and we will be here, to help you. You are not alone."

Astrid took a deep breath and looked at her family, a sad smile on her face as she nodded.

"By the way..." Ekon murmured after his mother's sigh of delight, "we might have, eh...slight problem."

Both blonde heads turned to Ekon's.

"What?" Astrid said.

Ekon bit his lip, "Toothless."

* * *

><p>The heat hit him like a ton of bricks as he stuck his head into the great hall. The first floor was clear of people, fiery flames roared from the tables and chairs. Hiccup stuffed his mouth into his arm to avoid the smoke. Sweat dripped from his brow as he climbed the stairs to the second floor. His eyes widened when he saw the bodies. Dead, charring bodies engulfed in flames. His attention suddenly turned to a very high cry for help. A child's voice. He held his head away from the flames, the temperature almost killed him.<p>

He climbed the last set of stairs with trouble until he found the source of the cry. It was a little girl. She was crying over her mother's limp body. Hiccup saw blood pouring from the mother's left temple. Hiccup acted quickly, lifted the woman into his arms.

"No! Leave Mama alone! We don't want your help!" The little girl pulled on his arm.

Hiccup struggled to stay on foot, "this building's going down. We need to get out of here."

"No! The pirates are out there!" The little girl was about to run at Hiccup just as two hands pulled her away.

"Tuffnut!" Hiccup sighed with relief, "Boy, am I glad to see you!"

"Dude, it's like a million degrees in here, let's move! What's up with the little girl and the dead chick."

The little girl gasped.

"Tuffnut! She's not dead! Come on, let's get out of here."

"Fine by me."

Hiccup carried the mother down the steps and Tuffnut held the little girl's collar as they traveled down the stairs as fast as they could. It felt like it was getting hotter and hotter. Their path was filled with deep black smoke as they tip toed through. When they got to the front of the hall, wood suddenly fell down from the ceiling, blocking the entrance doors. Hiccup jumped out of the way and the little girl screamed.

They didn't have long; little snaps could be heard above them, and they weren't good.

"Come on; let's go out the back way!" Hiccup said

"There's a back way?"

Hiccup adjusted the weight in his arms, "I hope so."

The two men and struggling child ran through the flames and tables to the back. Luckily, a small door was waiting for them. Hiccup almost cried with relief as his face hit the outside air and felt a faint breeze. He looked back to make sure Tuffnut was following. The little girl's face lit with fear at the sight of the battlefield, but anything was better than burning to death.

Hiccup set the lady down on the ground and checked her head. She looked knocked out, but she was breathing. Hiccup watched as the little girl climbed down to her mother.

"She will be fine," Hiccup rested a hand on her shoulder.

"Thank you, I..." The girl's face lit up with fear as the building collapsed.

"Run!" Hiccup yelled as he grasped the woman once more.

They could feel debris hit their backs as they ran. A sudden rush of flames caused them to topple over. Hiccup kept his head in the grass as smoke passed over their bodies. When the sound of wood breaking died, Hiccup lifted his head and spit out some grass. The little girl was gone. She was already pulling her mother away from them. Hiccup looked over to Tuffnut whose face was covered in ash.

"That was awesome."

Hiccup would have let out a laugh if it was not for the piercing feeling at the back of his neck. He flipped around to see a man. It wasn't just any man though, he was a pirate. The dark eyed leader who had been wandering through Berk's forests what seemed like a lifetime ago. His bow was pointed directly in the center of Hiccup's forehead.

"I couldn't believe it. That's really the Chief of Berk?"

"Yes. Not much like his father, is he?" That voice. Hiccup could recognize that voice from anywhere. Not too long ago he had heard it burning through many long, pointless stories. Roren, the Warheads chief stepped out from behind Hiccup.

Hiccup was dumbstruck as he and Tuffnut were pulled from the ground

"I don't understand," Hiccup pleaded, "you called for our help. You said..."

"You're too naive, son." Roren's words were like slime.

"You son of a-" Hiccup mouth was suddenly stuffed with cloth and the pirate wrapped it around the back of his neck.

"We will take the long haired one too," the dark eyed man spoke, "can't have him blabbing to his friends."

"Thank you, my friend."

Hiccup was in shock, his friend?

"You, my friend are a slimy, misleading monster," Hiccup watched as they shook hands, "Ever thought of returning to the life of the sea?"

"No, my pirate days are over. I'm Chief now. And one day," Roren looked down to Hiccup, "I'll be chief of Berk too."

Hiccup roared in anger. He struggled against his chains. The only thing he could do was give Roren the coldest stare he could.

"Having a nice life, Hiccup. I know I will..." with a laugh, he shoved a sac over Hiccup's head.

* * *

><p>Your guys' reviews from last chapter was amazing you read, I know, poor Hiccup. Poor Astrid. But hey! Hiccup and Tuffnut are alive! (for now ;))

Don't forget to leave a review!

9. Coldstone Island

Chapter Nine- Coldstone Island

* * *

><p>Has it really been two weeks?"<p>

Eret sat himself beside his friends and took a swig of ale. Fishlegs and Snotlout looked down at their own mugs gloomily. It really had been two weeks since Hiccup's death. Point blank, the town was ruined. With no chief, no one knew how to go about their regular day. There had not been any town events, dinners, visitors or even meetings, other than the one declaring Astrid as chief until Valka returned. No one knew when Valka would return, she had been gone for over three weeks. Astrid being active chief wasn't too comforting either; none of the three men had even seen a glimpse of her.

They hadn't seen Ruffnut either.

Eret remembered that night. He remembered pressing the cloth to Astrid's shoulder, the blood quickly soaking through. He remembered Ingrid brushing his hands away as she worked to get her daughter away from the scene. He remembered the panicked Hooligans. Some were yelling for the chief, others were yelling to get back to the ships. Then, he remembered looking at Ruffnut.

The blonde girl looked up to the heap of fire and debris that had once been a great hall. Her eyes were blank, and her hands hung uselessly at her side. She was completely still. Almost frozen. She took a step closer to the building but he stopped her suddenly. He grabbed her arm and for the first time, she looked up to his eyes with complete terror.

Eret walked her over to Fishlegs. The man was almost in tears as he watched the flames. Eret gave him a quick slap on the head to make him focus.

"Get Ruffnut to safety. Return to the ships! Tell everyone, back to the ships!"

Eret remembered the long trip home. He watched as Ruffnut sat with her head in her knees, she had cocooned herself in a blanket that someone had thought to put over her shoulders. Eret too sat on the floor of the deck, watching the night skies for any dragons, just like he used to. He thought about approaching her, telling her he was sorry, but she looked too tired.

In the days after their return, Ruffnut locked herself away in her home. No one wanted to bother her; they were all too sad themselves. Over the past two weeks, there had been no talk of a funeral for either Tuffnut or the Chief. It was almost like time was frozen. That was all until one day, when the door to the Great hall opened.

Everyone stopped. All talking and clanging of mugs against wood

ceased in a matter of seconds. All eyes were on Astrid as she slowly entered the hall. She looked frail, older. Her shoulder was wrapped in gauze and she walked with a slight limp up to their table. All three men rose from their chairs, helmets flying off of their heads with respect.

Astrid gave each of them blank stares. She looked around the hall; all the other Viking men had risen as well and held their helmets in their hands. It was only until Astrid nodded, that each of them sat down to continue their drinks.

As she turned back to her friends, she had the wind knocked out of her as Fishlegs barreled into her with a hug. She hesitantly wrapped her hands around his back. Astrid heard Fishlegs sniffle and he looked at Snotlout, his eyes glassy. Snotlout reached up a hand and put it on Astrid's shoulder before quickly removing it. She gave him a sad smile. Eret cleared his throat. Astrid pulled away from Fishlegs and cleared her own.

"Right, tell me everything I missed."

Fishlegs argued, "Astrid, you don't have to bounce back right away."

"Yes I do, Fishlegs," she turned to Eret, "what did I miss?"

Eret sighed, "Everyone's looking for answers. They want justice. They want the Warhead's heads on a stick. Rumours have spread that Roren planned that night."

"Roren did plan that night," Astrid voice was dangerous, "he is responsible for this."

Eret raised an eyebrow, "Well, until we know for certain. We need a Chief. That's you, according to Gobber, until Valka returns."

Astrid wrapped her hands around her waist and took a deep breath. Fishlegs was about to comfort her again when she held up a hand to stop him. She looked almost surprised.

"Wait, w- where's Ruffnut?" she suddenly gasped, "Oh my god! Tuff-" her voice cracked, "I completely forgot. I-" Astrid saw Snotlout's eyes well up and he looked away from the group. Astrid then turned to Fishlegs who looked sadly at his feet.

Eret was the first to speak, "Ruff's locked herself away in her home. She won't come out, not even for food or water. I hope she's not starving in there..."

Astrid shook her head and regained control of her emotions. "Alright," she said, "here's what we are going to do. Snotlout, you get all Berkians together, tell them I am back. I am ready to be their temporary chief. Take your dragons out to sea; be at watch for any Warheaders. If you find any, bring them straight to me." she turned to Fishlegs, "Fishlegs, you and I are going to look for Toothless. He's lost, and he doesn't understand what is happening. I have to find him."

"What do you want me to do?" Eret asked.

"Take care of Ruffnut," she said as she pushed Snotlout and Fishlegs towards the door.

"What?" Eret spat, "Why me? She doesn't want to see me!"

"Oh yes she does, believe me." Astrid took him aside for a moment, "You listen to me; don't go breaking her heart more than it already is. You give her whatever she needs, be whoever she needs you to be. Do I make myself clear?"

Eret gulped, "Fine."

Astrid added, "And Eret..."

"Yeah?"

"I know you know...I know you know I'm pregnant," Astrid looked up to him, "Did you?"

"Tell anyone?" Eret looked back, "No, just your mother. I won't tell anyone else, I'm good at keeping secrets."

"Thank you," Astrid sighed, "Now I have a dragon to find."

Eret decided to stop at the arena beforehand to check on Skullcrusher. He and the other dragons were relaxing in the autumn breeze. He approached the dragon slowly, gently petting his giant head. He looked at Barf and Belch. Belch's head was looking off in the distance. He wasn't as relaxed as the other dragons; he knew something was up, something had happened to Tuffnut. Eret swallowed and made his way up to the Thorston house.

When he found himself at their home, Ruff and Tuff's mother Gerda was sitting outside on a log. Eret awkwardly walked towards the woman. She looked obviously upset. She had just lost one of her children, but Eret felt sorry for her for a different reason on top of that. The town had just lost their chief, and although the news of Tuffnut passing was sad, it was nowhere near as drastic as losing their chief. It looked as though no one gave to give their condolences. Eret bent down to look in the older woman's eyes.

"Morning, Gerda," he caught her gaze, "How's Ruff this morning?"

Gerda suddenly snapped into reality and placed a hand on Eret's chin, "Oh sweet boy... She's the same. You can try to talk to her if you would like, but it's no use, she's just not ready yet. I get her to eat and drink, that's really all I can ask."

Eret thanked the older lady and entered the house. It looked like a house Tuffnut and Ruffnut would be raised in. Knives and axes covered the tables and floors. Eret ran to a pot of potatoes that were boiling over and took them off the fire, Gerda must have forgotten about them. The house was dark, so he went to the fire and threw another log in. Eret heard a noise coming from upstairs. He looked, it was even darker upstairs. He couldn't help noticing a stench coming from above as he climbed the stairs. He squinted and almost gasped. Ruffnut was barely noticeable under a heap of clothes and blankets. Her room was covered in axes, papers, clothes and broken glass. Eret pushed the door open as far as it could go. He went to

the window and opened the shutters, gladly allowing sunshine and air in.

Ruffnut made a growl and appeared from under the covers. Her long hair was let down and she looked at Eret with wide eyes. Eret's eyes widened as a glimpse of Ruffnut's skin appeared. She was naked under those blankets. Eret suddenly swore and turned around.

"Sorry!" his knuckles clenched, "I didn't know! Your mother let me in, I swear I didn't know!"

Ruffnut growled again and pushed her hair out of her face, "what are you doing here?"

Eret sucked on his thumb, "You know, I would feel a lot better talking to you if you had your clothes on."

Ruffnut sighed and picked herself off of the bed. Eret heard her rummaging through the clothes on the floor. When he turned around, she had just thrown a shirt over her head. She looked terrible. Her hair was longer than he remembered. He had never seen it out of its three braids, it cascaded down the sides of her head to her stomach. She pushed it back and sat on the corner of her bed. Eret watched as she chewed her fingernails. Her knees were shaking. Black shadows covered her eyes.

Eret sat down softly on the edge of her bed. He waited, desperately wishing that she would say something first. He hadn't prepared a motivational speech before he came. He was hoping she would just bounce back to her regular self and try to flirt with him. Eret let out a puff of air. He wasn't very good at this.

"So...Everyone else is pretty concerned about you. They think you're going to rot in here, which you might, considering the smell." He wrinkled his nose.

Ruffnut shrugged her shoulders, "that's the plan..."

Eret frowned, "hey now...I know this isn't easy for you. But I think it's time we get you back on your feet."

"I don't want to get back on my feet. I would rather stay here. I like it here, it's quiet."

Eret shook his head, "The Ruff I know couldn't stand the quiet."

Ruffnut suddenly shook her head and jumped up from the bed, "You don't' know a Ruff."

He was beyond shocked as she grabbed a glass from the side table and flung it at his head. She looked as wild as an animal. He jumped off the bed and ran for the door; she was quicker and blocked it.

"You don't know me at all. Why would they send you? You're not even our friend, we have only known you for like, a year." she gritted her teeth as she got closer to him. Eret gulped, she looked very dangerous with a piece of shattered glass in her hand.

"That's enough, Ruffnut, blimey; I was just trying to help."

"Oh yeah, well blimey, Eret. I don't want your help!" she imitated him. Eret's eyes went from her eyes to her hand. She looked down; she must have squeezed the glass to hard, blood dripped from her finger tips. In one quick movement, Eret grasped her hand and made her drop the glass. She swore silently and pulled her hand away; examining the wound she had created.

Eret watched in shock. He never thought she was capable of being that dangerous. He hovered over her as she wiped the blood on her knee.

"Just...get out," she sighed.

Eret was tempted to run as fast as he could. He bit his lip. He couldn't leave her, not all bloody and alone. He reached down to the floor and grabbed a piece of clothing. He ripped it in to a small bandage and took Ruffnut's hand. He slowly wrapped the fabric around the cut. Ruffnut tried to pull away but he held tight.

"Wh- why are you doing this?" she growled, "Why are you helping me?"

_Because Astrid would kill me if I didn't, _he thought.

* * *

><p>Astrid sighed as she brushed a branch away from her face. Fishlegs was beside her, yelling out the dragon's name. A sudden pain hit her heart as she realized what she had done. It had been over two weeks since Hiccup's death. She had locked herself away, and did not take any care of Stormfly or even bothered to comfort Toothless. The poor dragon was lost and alone in the forest. Astrid's eyes went to Stormfly; she had her snout in the grass trying to pick up the black dragon's scent. Luckily for Astrid, Stormfly had been forgiving. As soon as she was dressed and out of the house the blue dragon was already nudging her lovingly.<p>

The young woman was still not quite herself. She wore her father's old coat. It was heavily furred and large, more of a blanket than anything. She still hadn't washed her hair in a week and it swayed down her back in knots. It was cold, and winter was coming. The forest trees were bright with warm colours and light frost covered the ground from the previous night. She wanted to crawl back into bed, but Astrid knew it was time to let go. Hiccup would just laugh at her if he saw her like this. He would say that Astrid was acting like a scared terrible terror, and then she would playfully punch him on the arm. With Hiccup gone, it was Astrid's responsibility to find Toothless. She had to do it. No questions asked.

As they walked deeper into the forest, Fishlegs glanced at her several times. She watched her feet.

"Would you like to talk about it?" Fishlegs softly asked her.

Astrid turned towards him, "Not really, no."

"Are you sure?" Fishlegs asked.

"Eh- yes I am sure."

Fishlegs sniffled, "Are you sure? Because I could really use someone to talk to..."

Astrid turned to the whimpering man and sighed, "Stop it, Fishlegs. Get yourself together. I can't be your mother and wipe your tears, okay? I have more to worry about than your feelings."

"You're right. I- I'm sorry...I just can't believe he's gone."

Astrid's eyes watered, but they were both shocked back into focus as a dragon's roar filled the air. They turned to see a black dragon growling at them.

Toothless.

Astrid immediately approached the dragon.

"Astrid-" his eyes never left the angry dragon, "Maybe you shouldn't."

She brushed Fishlegs' hand away. She took a deep breath and looked back to the dragon. His glare went from Fishlegs to her. The dragon's eyes widened as the girl approached him.

"Toothlessâ€¦" her voice was soft. Both hands stretched out to him, "Toothless, it's okay."

He growled at her. Astrid was only a foot away from him. She slowly got to her knees in front of him and reached out a hand to him. Toothless had a sudden look of understanding. It was just Astrid. Just the young girl he had taken on a flight all those years ago. It was just her. He stopped growling and let her touch his head. He looked up to her eyes. They were bright with tears. Her face had fallen. Her bottom lip and hands trembled as she touched him. And then he knew. Something had happened. Hiccup was gone.

The dragon let out a roaring moan. He lowered his head. He caught sight of Astrid's stomach. He noticed the slight curving, moon shape. He sniffed it, and was overwhelmed with the urge to protect her. He nudged his head into her chest and Astrid rubbed the dragon. She held onto him tightly, letting the fresh tears run down her face.

"It's okay." she then added, "its okay, bud."

* * *

><p>The darkness was agonizing.<p>

He was unsure if it was night or day, he couldn't even tell how long they had been down there. He felt sick to his stomach, he had finished his bread hours ago and he was starving. Hiccup could tell that Tuffnut was crying. Although mostly silent, he could hear the sniffles in the dark. He felt like crying too, but he was too tired. When almost all seemed lost, Hiccup rolled onto his back and placed his hands on his chest, not caring about the puddles of water or the squeaks of the rats. He took a deep breath and let his mind go blank; maybe this would be his final resting place.

Hiccup opened his eyes when Tuffnut hit him. He growled, "What was that for?" Tuffnut gasped, "I wasn't sure if you were breathing, you sounded like you stopped breathing."

"So you hit me?" Hiccup massaged his shoulder.

He could hear Tuffnut hyperventilating. The male twin picked himself off the floor and banged on the walls. Hiccup swore silently and Tuffnut threw himself to the sides of the ship in panic. "LET US OUT OF HERE!" Tuffnut roared, "I can't breathe down here! Let us walk the plank! Let us out!"

Hiccup jumped to his feet, "What are you doing? Are you insane? SHUT UP!"

Hiccup jumped on the yelling man and they fell to the ground. Tuffnut fought him and yelled despite having Hiccup's hand tightly across his mouth. Suddenly, the ship stopped. It was such a rapid change that it caused barrels to come crashing down onto them. Hiccup was sure he could hear a rat screaming as the whole ship shook. After a few seconds of grinding, the ship stopped permanently and the great doors opened. It was night time; the moon filled the ship with light, causing Hiccup and Tuffnut to wince. As his eyes focused, Hiccup saw the dark eyed man looking over them. "Don't get your panties in a knot, you sacks of meat. We are here."

Tuffnut opened his mouth, "Where is here?"

Before either of them could get an answer, the man let down a rope. Tuffnut eyed Hiccup to climb first; Hiccup took the rope and climbed the best he could. When he got to the surface, the man pushed him to another large guy and Hiccup was engulfed with a tight hold. As Tuffnut pulled himself up, Hiccup took in his surroundings. The moon was bright on the water; the boat was sitting on the sand of a fairly small island. The island was beautiful; rocks formed cliffs on either side, and houses were sprawled out everywhere. His heart tightened at the slight reminder of Berk, but this island had no dragons.

He and Tuffnut were pushed off of the boat with axes to their backs. They were guided up the beach and into the village. Where could they be taking them? Above all, Hiccup hoped they were not going to their execution. As they marched through center town, sounds of people and music became clearer. It had to be midnight, but the town was lit up like a party. They marched passed singing drunks. Hiccup looked to see a group of teenage boys on their knees sharing a pipe. He ignored the stares of two women sitting out on the porch, they whispered as he passed. Tuffnut almost choked as a very large woman in very little clothes approached him. The woman smelled of alcohol. She rubbed her chest against Tuffnut's body and kissed his forehead, the man holding Tuffnut pushed the lady away and told her to find work somewhere else. The woman swore at him. They passed a whole group of woman who looked the same. Hiccup felt uncomfortable as he saw one who was in the middle of getting her next customer.

As they passed center town, Hiccup gulped. They were heading right towards the very large cliffs and rocks. He suddenly saw an entrance in the rocks and was amazed. The whole cliff of rocks seemed to be some sort of building. He and Tuffnut exchanged glances as they entered. The entry room was much quieter than the town outside; it was lit by fire sticks and was empty except for a man sitting with a

very large axe. He was guarding sets of keys.

"Calder," the axe man spoke.

Hiccup turned to the dark eyed man, so he must be Calder. It was about time Hiccup knew his name.

"I'll need the key for the west-end cave," Calder spoke confidently.

The axe man stood, he was at least two feet taller than Hiccup. He half smiled as he towered over the two Berkians, "These must be the newbies. Welcome to Hel, boys. We do hope you enjoy your stay."

"Please, don't overwhelm them;" Calder told Axe man, "They have had a long journey."

Hiccup wanted to say something. He wanted to punch Calder and this axe man in the face. His heart raced, he wanted to know where he was, why he was here, and most of all he wanted to go home. Instead he gave Calder a look of pure hatred.

The grip on Hiccup's shoulder tightened as they were pushed down the cave. It was very cold in the caves, and he shivered as they went down many dark ways. A lit fire stick was beside his left ear; the cave halls looked all the same, and how Calder navigated through them was a mystery. Hiccup couldn't concentrate on the walk, all he could hear was dripping. Drip. Drip. Drip. He looked around the cave walls, they seemed dry and steady, and where on earth was that water coming from. Drip. Drip. Drip. The water dripped as fast as his heartbeat. But suddenly it got quieter and quieter. He could still hear it, though. It bugged him more than anything.

They arrived at the very end of the cave. He saw great metal walls separating one side of the cave wall. He looked at Calder who opened the gates and turned to Tuffnut and himself.

"Try to sleep the rest of the night. You will need your energy in the morning." With that, Tuffnut and Hiccup were pushed into the cell. Hiccup lost his balance, and he fell onto the hard ground. This room was lighter than the rest of the cave. He looked up to see the moon shining through a hole above. It was hardly big enough to fit a terrible terror. When he turned over to see if Tuffnut was okay, he found himself staring at four other men. A blonde one, with a faint scar over the left side of his face offered Hiccup his hand, "Sorry this happened to you boys. But welcome to your worst nightmare."

Hiccup hesitantly took the man's hand and stood, "Where are we?"

The blond helped Tuffnut stand as well and cleared his throat, "A small island, Coldstone Island."

Hiccup's eyebrows lowered, "I- I have never heard of this island."

"You wouldn't have, it's kept very low key. My name is Frey," he pointed to two other males who were standing beside each other, "this is Aradynn," he pointed his thumb to the one with curly black hair

who grunted a smile. Frey pointed to the other one, he had very little hair, and scars outlined his skull, "and this is Scar, we call him that for...various reasons."

Hiccup frowned as something suddenly jumped out at him. A young man, no older than nineteen jumped out at him to shake his hand. He was dark skinned and spoke in a language Hiccup had never heard. Frey jumped forward and knocked the dark skinned boy over the head.

"Sorry," Frey said as the boy smiled at Hiccup, "this is Pavel. He does not speak our language. We usually just ignore him, but he likes meeting people."

The boy approached Hiccup with a smile, "Pavel."

Hiccup took the boy's hand and shook it; he looked to the others who were staring back with kind smiles. He then looked at Tuffnut, who looked confused and tired. Tuffnut met Hiccup's eyes just as Hiccup spoke.

"Uh, this is Tuffnut. And- and I'm Hiccup."

Frey clapped his hands, "Great! Nice to meet you Tuffnut and Hiccup. Now, we should really get some sleep. Busy day tomorrow."

Without question, all four men fell onto the cave floor and not another word was said. Hiccup turned to Tuffnut who was now staring at them with shock. This was going to be a long night.

* * *

><p>Sorry this chapter is late.. My beta was busy all weekend and I couldn't post it without running it by her. Also, annoyingly enough, my computer broke this weekend and the backspace key is broken on my laptop; so I can't really write on anything but my tablet,. Alas, next chapter will be posted soon. Don't forget to leave a review!

10. The Announcement

Chapter 10- The Announcement

* * *

><p>Hiccup hoped it was all just a terrible nightmare. He was hoping he would awake in his bed, his toes from his right leg peeking out from the soft blankets. He hoped for his beautiful wife to be beside him, her golden locks shining with the morning light and tickling his nose. He was hoping for his best friend to be sleepily waiting for him outside to get the morning started. He was hoping to hear the soft sound of waves crashing on the cliffs of Berk. But he didn't get that. He woke suddenly to near darkness, the only light coming from the hole overhead. His back screamed in pain from the hard ground. Hiccup moaned as he remembered the events from yesterday. He pulled his knees to his chest and yawned.<p>

Hiccup bolted from the ground when he heard a voice suddenly say, "He really trained dragons?"

He turned to see Tuffnut leaning against the cave wall; he seemed to have all the cave members' attention as they sat around him. Hiccup saw Frey nodding his head. His eyes drifted to Hiccup and he smiled, "Look! The chief is awake!"

Hiccup groaned. Looks like Tuffnut finally snapped back to normal. Scar reached out and pulled Hiccup up. His head felt dizzy as he walked over to the others. Aradynn handed him a wet cloth.

"What's this for?" Hiccup stared down at it.

The men looked around to each other and silently laughed. Frey cleared his throat, "You suck on it."

Hiccup frowned down to the brown looking cloth. He looked to Tuffnut who just nodded his head. Pavel was staring at him with a large smile and thumbs up. He suddenly felt very embarrassed as all five sets of eyes stared at him. He hesitantly lifted the cloth to his mouth and sucked on it. It was damp, the moisture that hit his tongue was heavenly. It was water. He sucked harder. Very quickly, Aradynn reached up and grabbed the cloth. Hiccup gave him a sharp look.

"We have to save it," Aradynn said, "it's the only water we get until work."

Hiccup looked around in shock, "You've got to be kidding me. That's not enough water to keep six men alive."

He watched Aradynn smirk to Scar and say, "it was enough for four."

He ignored the comment and turned to Tuffnut, "Tuff, what did you tell them?"

Pavel embraced Hiccup and pointed to his chest, his brown eyes were wide, "Chief."

Hiccup backed away and moaned, "Tuff, what did you say?"

He jerked as Frey gave him a friendly slap across the back. Turns out, Tuff had told the men almost everything about Berk. Good thing the two of them knew so much about the other prisoners. He happened to include the part of Hiccup being Chief of Berk.

"Don't tell us we will have to bow to you," Aradynn whispered, "I bow to enough people."

"What?" Hiccup raised an eyebrow, "No! I- You don't have to do anything for me."

"Good," Frey said, "Besides, no one out there is going to bow to you." he pointed to the bars. Hiccup walked over and looked out; the halls were silent except for the distant sound of that infuriating drip. He could hear it, barely loud enough to notice, but continuing its steady rhythm no different from the night before. Drip. Drip. Drip. He shook his head and it was gone. The dripping was replaced by footsteps. A figure suddenly appeared to make his or her way down the hall. Hiccup quickly made out the figure to be Calder. He attempted to lock eyes with Calder as he marched down the hall. Paying no

attention to Hiccup, he reached down and unlocked the doors. He opened it and backed away from the gates.

"Alright men, you know the drill."

Hiccup felt the five men brush past him. Their heads were lowered as they exited the cave and lined up on the side of one wall. Tuffnut followed, making Hiccup pull him back by the shoulder.

"Where are you taking us?" Hiccup said.

Frey turned his head and gave Hiccup a terrified look. Hiccup suddenly sensed Calder's cold stare. Without even thinking, Hiccup pushed Tuffnut out the cave and followed the men.

"Whatever, I always liked surprises." he mumbled.

He and Tuffnut walked beside each other down the hall. Calder was in the front leading. Frey was behind him followed by Aradynn and Scar. Pavel was skipping happily behind to keep up. They were far enough away from the rest to speak to each other.

"You shouldn't have told them about Berk," Hiccup whispered to him.

"Why not?" Tuffnut said, "It's all cool, they are prisoners just like us."

Hiccup sighed, "That's not the point, Tuff. What I'm trying to say is we are outcasts. Even if we are prisoners, we don't know who these guys are. What we tell them could come back and haunt us. From now on, it's just you and me. So try not to get yourself killed wherever you go, okay?"

Tuffnut nodded just in time for them to exit the cave. The two males' mouths' dropped at the sight of the once lively town. The square that had previously been filled with music and bustling with merchants and children was now silent. No one was on the streets. What was even more surprising was the cliff face overhead. Men carrying pickaxes were littered all over it coming in and out of small caves with huge boulders. Other men below were using their picks to break down the rocks being brought to them from above. Some men were climbing precariously high to reach loose rocks to knock them down. Every few minutes someone would shout out to warn the men below of falling stones. A prisoner walked by them, carrying a whole wheelbarrow of rocks towards the Cave Building. Hiccup shook his head with confusion. When he turned to Frey, the men were already walking towards the walls of rocks. Hiccup slapped Tuff's shoulder to get his attention and they ran after the men. Calder was gone. He always seemed to just disappear.

Hiccup stopped beside Frey, "What is all this?"

Frey sighed and turned to Tuffnut and Hiccup, "Alright, lads. Listen up, 'cause I'm only going to explain this once. As you know, this is a small island. Not many people live here, those who do are travelers, mostly staying until they can get back on their feet. In order to keep your share here, work is a must. This is more of an industry than an island, really."

Hiccup shook his head, "But I don't understand...We don't want to be here, they kidnapped us."

Frey huffed out a laugh, "Well...you know. Not everyone wants to be here; sometimes you need the extra push of motivation."

"By motivation do you mean an arrow pointed at your head?" Tuffnut muttered.

Frey smiled and shoved a pickaxe into Hiccup's hands.

* * *

><p>Astrid opened the door to her home and let Toothless walk in first. The dragon hesitated; he sniffed the floor and looked around the room. Astrid took a deep breath and followed. Everything was the way they had left it. The fire pit still smelled faintly of ashes from Hiccup's attempt to make breakfast. Astrid's axe was placed neatly on its hook. Hiccup's papers were sprawled out on the table where he had left them. She closed the door and sighed. Astrid had made the decision to move back home. It wasn't that she didn't love her family, but they were getting too concerned. Ingrid couldn't last five minutes without bringing up the baby and how Astrid should really eat more than she does. Ekon was always talking about that terrible terror. Sometimes it became too much. Ingrid was hesitant to let her daughter go, but Astrid left anyway.<p>

The first thing she did when she returned home was bathe. Snotlout stopped by and offered to take in Toothless for the night. Toothless was in shock, and he hardly noticed when Snotlout placed his hand on his head guiding him away from the home. Stormfly, on the other hand, was overjoyed that her best friend in the whole world was almost back to normal. She jumped excitedly around the house, knocking things to the floor. Astrid let Stormfly heat her bath, and she took off her clothes. When she looked in the mirror, she was almost surprised. Her stomach was getting larger. She felt bloated as she turned to the side. A small bump was definitely there. She pursed her lips and stepped into the tub. She would have to tell the village soon; there was no doubt about it. They would notice eventually, and some probably already had. But she had to wait. She had to tell Valka first.

Her heart broke as she thought of her mother in law. Somewhere, she was out there flying with her dragon, believing that she would return to find her son, her only child, alive. But that wasn't going to happen. She knew she would have to tell her that her son was dead. She shook her head at the thought. Astrid took her time washing her hair and soaping her body. She wrapped herself in a robe and detangled her hair. She went upstairs to their room and look at their wardrobe. She opened it. She froze at the smell of his clothes; the smell of him. She allowed herself a moment of calmness before grabbing her clothes and closing the door quickly. She threw on her clothes and an extra sweater; it was getting cold. The sun was beginning to go down, and Astrid didn't feel like going to bed just yet; she was still wide awake. She also didn't want to be left alone.

Usually, on a Sunday night like this, she and Hiccup would go on a flight. Sometimes together, sometimes alone. But afterwards they would always go to the Great Hall and have fun with their friends.

Those were the good times. Now Astrid didn't know what she would do. She suddenly jumped at her door opening.

"Hiccup!?"

Her heart broke when she realised that it wasn't him. Valka had finally returned. She heard panicked breaths from downstairs. She climbed down the stairs with her hands across her stomach and looked at her mother in law. The woman looked tired from her long trip, but her eyes were wild. She searched the house, but he was nowhere to be found. She was about to climb the stairs when she noticed Astrid standing on the middle step. Astrid opened her mouth to say something, but she couldn't speak. Valka's eyes traveled from her daughter in law's to the ground.

Her son was dead. Her only son. She had only just gotten him back. She had spent twenty years apart from her husband, only to lose both of them within little more than a year. Her eyes filled with tears as she felt her heart break. How could this be? She thought Gobber was lying. She thought... there was absolutely no way he could be gone. She knew what she had to do. She turned quickly, exiting her son's house. The sun was almost down, and the weather was cold, but she didn't care, she had to get out there, she had to escape.

Valka heard Astrid call out to her. She felt a sudden tug on her shoulder but brushed it off.

This could never last. She had no right to be on Berk. She had no right to return in the first place. She was useless here, the wife of the chief. The mother of the chief. But now she was nothing. According to the town, she died twenty-one years ago, maybe she should have just stayed dead. She called for Cloudjumper who immediately knew something was up. She began to jump on her dragon when she heard her daughter in law scream at her.

"Where are you going?" Astrid had her hands on Cloudjumper's head, refusing her the ability to fly. The dragon pouted to Valka who had tears running down her cheeks.

Valka shook her head, " I can't stay here, I'm sorry. I need to get away. I need to go home- to my real home."

"No, you can't leave! Please! Not now, you're supposed to be chief!" Astrid's stare bore into her.

"You are Chief. I command it. I'll write it on paper if you get me a quill."

Astrid reached up and placed her hand on top of Valka's. Her heart stung as the green eyes she had given her son looked down on her.

"Please," she said, "you can't leave now. Not now. I need you here."

Valka let out a humorless, crazed laugh, "You need me? No! I never should have come back here in the first place. I belong with the dragons."

"No, you don't understand!" Astrid squeezed her hand, "Please...you

have to stay."

"For what?"

Astrid's eyes traveled to the ground. This was it, she was ready to let the secret out. She took a deep breath, but before she could say anything, Snotlout came running up to them. He was almost out of breath. Valka and Astrid both looked away as he approached them. He looked to Astrid first, "Sorry. I don't mean to interrupt... But the Warheads just showed up, they docked a few minutes ago. Roren's here. Astrid, he wants to speak with you."

Whatever Astrid was thinking about moments ago was completely gone. Astrid's face hardened as Snotlout's words sunk in. Roren. He was responsible for everything that had happened. He was going to pay for it. She was going to kill him. Astrid shrugged off Snotlout's arm and looked to Valka who was still trying to recover from the news. Astrid brushed her bangs away and looked to her.

"I need you. Come with me, please."

Valka looked at her with shock. Astrid sharply turned towards the docks, both Valka and Snotlout behind her. Berkians had come out of their homes to see the commotion. They all stood back watching Astrid storm through the village. Astrid reached out to one Berkian and stole the axe from his hands. She gripped it tightly as she walked on. Astrid only stopped when she saw Ruffnut and Eret walking towards her, seemingly confused. Her eyes traveled to Ruffnut's and they shared a moment. If Astrid was not so determined to find Roren, she might have acknowledged them more as she marched past them.

"Whoa, what's going on?" Eret asked Snotlout as they chased after Astrid.

"Dude," Snotlout just shook his head, "I'm pretty sure all hell's about to break loose."

Before Astrid could comment, she saw him. He was looking around Berk, enjoying the view. His men were behind him, talking with each other. Astrid stormed through the crowd and raised her axe. She saw his neck; that was her target. Before she could get even three feet in front of him, his soldiers already had their axes and swords up, yelling with fury. Astrid was pulled back by Fishlegs and Eret. She felt hot tears run down her cheeks but quickly gained control. She didn't want Roren to see her like that. She wanted to break him.

"_You_," she spat, "I'm going to _kill_ you."

She heard Berkians whisper in fright. She heard Fishlegs whisper in her ear, telling her to lower her axe. But she couldn't. She wouldn't. Roren looked at her with complete shock. His brown eyes didn't betray any further emotions. He reached up and stroked his chin. He turned to his men signaling them to lower their weapons. As they did, Eret reached out and lowered Astrid's arm with force.

"I'm so sorry about your loss, Astrid," Roren swallowed, he spoke loudly so all the Berkians could hear him, "I had no idea about the death of your chief until late Thursday night. You retreated so soon, we weren't sure how many men were lost in that vicious

attack."

Astrid's chest puffed with anger and her face reddened, "We didn't retreat. You set the whole thing up! You knew Hiccup would come to your help, so you planned the pirates attack. You wanted Berk to fail. You are a murderer."

Roren shook his head quickly, "Now, Astrid! I know you are upset, but you can't possibly think that is true! We called for your help because those men were overpowering us. We cannot thank your men enough for their sacrifice."

Astrid blinked and her face fell, "Their sacrifice? Their sacrifice!? Hiccup, our chief is dead because of you! My friend is dead because of you! The peace treaty is off. I want you off of my island immediately or we will burn your boats and throw you in the ocean and watch you drown."

The town went quiet. Astrid watched Roren shiver; he looked to his men before returning to Astrid's glare, "Your island ? You cannot be chief. You have no blood relation to the Haddocks. By law, you must pick a new family blood line to be chief. Or, other steps must be taken."

Astrid saw something twinkle in his eye. That monster. He wanted Berk. Technically, with no chief, Roren could easily take over Berk and call it his own. Even more importantly, he was the one who caused Hiccup's death; he almost had a right to take Berk. But Astrid would never allow it; she would rather die than bow down to Roren.

"Sorry, Astrid," he said softly, "But...Hiccup had no heir... no other family. Looks like the Haddock line has finally died."

Astrid raised her head. Roren's mouth had a slight smirk. She looked to his men, they were all the same. She looked to the Berkians. They were almost as angry as Astrid. She squeezed her knuckles and spoke loudly as Roren turned, "No. Actually, it's not."

The crowd went silent. Roren turned his head with confusion, "What did you say?"

Astrid turned to the Berkians, speaking more to them than Roren. She took a deep breath, "The Haddock line has not died because- because...before his death... I mean...Hiccup and I..." she swallowed, "I am pregnant."

She could hear Roren actually gasp, she felt like smirking but her heart was beating too quickly. She looked to the crowd. Snotlout was staring up at her with an eyebrow raised, almost like he couldn't believe it. Eret gave her a thumbs up. Close to him, Ruffnut was watching her feet; Astrid couldn't tell what she was thinking. Fishlegs had tears in his eyes but was smiling. Gobber, who Astrid hadn't seen in weeks, had his hand over his mouth. He silently turned away and Astrid could see his shoulders tug with quiet sobs.

As Astrid's head turned, she saw Valka. The older woman looked at her with sad eyes. Astrid bit her lip as her mother in law slowly approached her. Valka's hand went to Astrid's cheek. Astrid smiled to her. Valka nodded her head. In an instant, she gently pushed Astrid out of the way and turned to Roren.

"I don't know who you are, and I really don't care," Valka shrugged her shoulders, "But I know you are responsible for my son's death. And for that, we hereby ban you from any contact with us ever again. You will leave, and never come back." she leaned in closer, "If you even think about threatening my daughter in law or grandchild, gods help you."

Roren's upper lip quivered with anger. He was about to argue when Toothless appeared beside him roaring as loud as he could. The Warheads screamed, Roren was the first one to their boats and within minutes, they were sailing away from Berk.

Astrid turned to the Berkians. They were still with shocked silence. Astrid gulped and her fists clenched. She cleared her throat, "I'm sorry for keeping it from you all. I guess I was just terrified. " Astrid looked directly to Valka who was still in shock herself, "you deserved to know."

Valka's mouth twitched into a smile and she shook her head. Tears filled her eyes as she embraced Astrid in a hug. A roar of cheers finally came from the Berkians. They chanted Astrid's name. Astrid's mouth dropped with surprised. Valka pushed her back and kissed her forehead, "I guess this is why you wanted me to stay."

Astrid nodded, "will you?"

Valka engulfed her in another hug, "of course I will."

Astrid sighed with relief. She felt a weight fall off her shoulders now that the secret was out. She was overjoyed that the village had taken the news so well. Her heart fluttered at the thought, she was carrying the future chief. She only wished the future chief would have a father.

* * *

><p>Don't forget to leave a review !

11. The First Supper

_ Chapter Eleven- The First Supper _

Astrid felt his warm hands. They tugged at her hips pulling her closer to his chest. She felt the butterflies grow in her stomach as he smiled down at her with that goofy grin. He fiddled with her fingers until their hands were locked tightly together. He brushed his lips against her neck and his fingers slid through her hair, undoing her braid. She could hear his voice. He wasn't saying anything important. Just talking. Astrid couldn't make out the words, but just the sound of his voice was comforting.

_She was suddenly left with silence. Her eyes opened slowly and she began looking around the room. It was empty. She looked to his side of the bed to see the blanket pulled up like he had gotten up from it. She was surprised at how dizzy she felt. As she fell back into bed, she heard a faint cry coming from downstairs. She grew curious, she knew that cry... How could she forget? It was an infant's cry. Maybe the baby was hungry...but she was so tired. Without another

thought, she climbed out of bed and went to the stairs. It seemed to take forever to get there; her feet were like bricks, every step was difficult. The baby's cries got louder and louder. She grew anxious as she finally reached the top of the stairs._

She could see the cradle from here. She heard her baby's cries. A smile tugged at her lips as she saw the small little hands emerge from the white blankets. She quietly stepped down the stairs. As she got closer to the cradle, her eyebrows knitted together. The baby was gone. Her head whipped around, she had just seen the baby, where had it gone? She saw blood. Blood was streaming by her toes. She followed the blood with her eyes and found a pair of grown feet. They were bare and bloody. More red liquid dripped from the person's body. As she followed the body, she saw the rips in his clothes. She saw the burns on his body. She saw his blank eyes staring at her. He was covered in blood. A sudden cold pierced her heart as she saw who it was. It was him.

She bolted awake and screamed. Jumping up from her pillow, she cried out and covered her eyes with her hands. She whimpered into them. It was only a dream, but it felt so real. She remembered feeling his warm touch, his voice was so soft. She almost wanted to fall back asleep just to see him once more. But there was no way she could possibly fall back to sleep, her heart was pounding and her body glistened with sweat. As she climbed out of her blankets, she had an idea of what she wanted to do. She wrapped her jacket around her shoulders and quietly exited the house, careful not to wake her worried mother or brother. The coldness of the autumn night air made her shiver as she made her way up to her own house. As she opened the door, she looked around; no cradle, no seeping blood on the floor, no Hiccup. She sighed and locked the door behind her. She didn't feel like going back to sleep, she wanted to talk to someone. Someone who wasn't her mother or Valka. She knew who.

The fires of the forge were still going strong through the night. She could feel the warmth of the fire hit her skin as she entered the forge. Gobber was standing over a sword, bringing his hammer down on it hard to bend it into shape. He hadn't heard Astrid come in. Astrid looked around the forge; it was still a messy work environment. Hiccup's stuff was not moved, his designs still hanging from the walls and in piles on his desk. Gobber had locked himself away in the forge ever since Hiccup had died, and it showed. Dozens of axes, shields and swords were piled up at all corners of the forge. Astrid cleared her throat and saw him jump.

He turned around and gave Astrid a bewildered look. He detached his hammer from his arm and the two stared at each other. Gobber motioned Astrid to take a seat on the bench and she did so.

Astrid cleared her throat once more, "We have not been able to speak since," she bit her tongue, "since you know."

"Oh. As you can see, I've been pretty busy here. Lots of work to be done," Gobber replied back to her.

Astrid gestured to the pile of weapons, "Indeed, very busy. What's all this stuff for?"

"Just in case, I have noticed we are not very prepared. If something happens, we need weapons. I might as well be the one to make them."

he paused for a moment, "And how have you been holding up?"

Astrid was going to say that she was fine, but she knew what he really meant. His eyes glanced at her stomach, which was finally starting to expand. Astrid had troubles most days fitting into her skull skirt.

"I'm fine," she smiled to him, "The baby is healthy too, that's what the healer says."

"Well, that's good," Gobber smiled back at her, "I'm glad to hear it. I still cannot believe it... Hiccup a father."

Her lips compressed into a thin line. Hiccup wasn't going to be a father. He would never get the chance, "yeah," she replied, "We were shocked too."

A strangely comforting silence filled the room around them. The fire crackled away and Astrid's lip quivered as everything suddenly hit her again. She was glad to have someone so close to her, someone that she cared about. Someone Hiccup cared about. Being in Hiccup's old place, being surrounded by his old belongings, it was almost like he was still here.

"I just cannot believe he is gone," Astrid said in a sturdy voice.

Gobber nodded, "I can't either."

"No-" she took a deep breath, "I won't believe he is gone."

Gobber stopped, he staggered to his feet and made his way over to Astrid. Astrid lowered her eyes as she felt him tower over her, "Astrid..."

"I saw him," she looked up, "He was alive. I mean, it was a dream." She shook her head, "he was covered in blood, but he was alive. When I woke up, it was like, Hiccup was still here. And ever since, I feel it in my heart, I feel like Hiccup is still here."

Gobber watched her in a shocked silence, "what do you mean?"

Astrid kept her voice down, she knew they were alone, but she didn't want anyone listening, she looked at Gobber with desperate eyes, "Hiccup was in the Warheads' Great hall, but how can we know that he was in there when it went down? Roren wanted this to happen, maybe he planned for it. There was no body, how can we know for sure?"

Gobber shook his head, "Roren's a chief. He would never."

Astrid's head tilted, "I heard it myself. Roren is responsible for this!"

Gobber licked his dry lips, "But...that just doesn't make sense. From what I heard, no one could survive that fire. And wouldn't someone of seen Hiccup leave the hall? I'm sorry, Astrid. But I just can't believe it. It's insane."

Astrid blinked, she shook her head and let out a humorless laugh. "What you think I'm some- some crazy, sad pregnant chick now?"

"Now Astrid, you know I didn't mean it like that." Gobber said

Astrid gave him a blank stare, "Whatever. I didn't come here to make you believe me. I just thought you would understand."

Before Gobber could protest Astrid angrily stomped away.

* * *

><p>Had it not been for Astrid's threats, Eret would never have been treading through the orange leaves of Berk at the crack of dawn. When he had asked Ruffnut if there was any way he could help her, he did not think this would be her first favor. He was not sure what she wanted him for, but he couldn't very well say no. He knocked at her door just as she opened it. She was dressed in her normal clothes, her hair in its normal braids. Her face was neutral as she looked him over. She seemed pretty awake for the crack of dawn. She moved to the edge of the doorway, inviting Eret inside. They kept their voices down, Gerda was still sleeping.<p>

"So, tell me," Eret leaned against the kitchen table, "what does a girl want to do at the crack of dawn?"

Something glimmered in Ruffnut's eyes. She sauntered up to her room and came back with a large basket. Eret reached to look inside but Ruffnut slapped his hand away.

Eret pulled back with a hiss, "What's this all about?"

Without answering, Ruffnut left the house and Eret followed impatiently.

"Get the boys," Ruffnut turned to him, "I'll get Astrid."

Eret huffed with annoyance, "are you going to tell me what we are doing or not?"

Ruffnut said, "Not."

Eret drooped as Ruffnut went running towards the Haddock house. Astrid was not going to enjoy this surprise. Especially with the pregnancy, she did not want to be awoken at dawn. It took much longer than Eret thought to pull Snotlout and Fishlegs out of bed. Fishlegs was sort of simple, but Snotlout? It took both Fishlegs and Eret pulling him by the legs as he held onto his bed frame. Snotlout gave Eret a piece of his mind before Hookfang finally managed to pull him out by his shirt.

As Ruffnut knocked on Astrid's front door, she heard a great moan come from upstairs followed by heavy footsteps. She flinched as the door flew open, revealing a very tired looking Astrid. The young woman was clearly lacking in the sleep department, especially after her nightmare from last night. She paused and gave Ruffnut a blank look. The two girls hadn't had the chance to speak to each other since the accident, which was quite surprising, considering they were going through the same feelings.

"Ruffnut," she met the other's girl's gaze and wiped drool off her

face, "I'm sorry I haven't been by to talk." she swallowed, "I just have a lot on my plate right now."

Ruffnut waved away her words and invited herself inside. She then told Astrid what she had planned.

It took a minute for Astrid to wrap her head around the idea. Ruffnut told her to meet her and the rest of the gang just off raven point whenever she was ready. As Ruffnut left, Astrid felt a chill run down her body. She was not ready for this, but who really was? She staggered to her feet from the chair, her back was quite sore these days and she didn't feel like doing much of anything. She took a basket full of potatoes and dumped its contents onto the counter. Her feet ached as she climbed the stairs to the bedroom. She went to the closet first, as she opened it, the smell of leather, autumn and warmth surrounded her. With a shaky breath, she reached into the wardrobe and grabbed Hiccup's winter sweater. He almost never wore it, except for special occasions like Snoggletog or very, very cold winter nights. She pressed her face into it, allowing her to take in the smell. Quickly, she folded it up and placed it in the basket. Next were a couple of his old vests, a pair of extra pants, some flight suits gone wrong and a whole bunch of outgrown right shoes. She shoved it all into the basket except for one. It was Hiccup's robe, the one he wore at his Eighteenth birthday party. The one he wore to their wedding. She wanted to keep it, it had been in his family for generations. Maybe one day, if she had a son, he could wear it to his Chieftain ceremony and his wedding.

Next she went to his desk. Hiccup really didn't own that many things. Most were stacks of designs and drawings. She hadn't the time or energy to search through them all. Just as she was about to leave, she bit her lip. It wasn't right to keep his things. And with what Ruffnut had planned, she had to do it. She reached her arm across the table and slid the papers into the basket.

It was now time for Astrid to the thing she dreaded the most.

* * *

><p>Tuffnut stretched his back out onto the large rock and covered his eyes with his hands. The hot sun shone down onto his skin. His whole body was sticky, glistening with sweat. His mouth felt dry as he ran a hand through his thick dreadlocks. Tuffnut was not sure how much longer he could take this; he and the others had been working out in the hot sun all day.<p>

They had already figured out a routine. Hiccup would lug the wheelbarrow into the dark cave, and a few minutes later, he would come out with rocks the size of large terrible terrors. Tuffnut would then chop the bigger rocks into smaller ones. Tuffnut was amazed how every time Hiccup went into the cave, he was able to come out with more rocks. It went on for hours. Hiccup got the rocks; Tuffnut broke them up, over and over again. The hours dragged on and on, the men at the work site were so tired they would not even speak to each other. His ears were booming with the clangs of the pickaxes and the squeaky wheels of the wheelbarrows.

Tuffnut hardly felt Hiccup slide down against the rock and mumble. Tuffnut pushed himself off the rock; Hiccup was looking at him with tired eyes. The Hooligan chief's face was covered in dirt, making his

green eyes stand out. His flight suit was almost completely ruined; he had ripped the sleeves off and ditched the shoulder padding. It was too hot for them, and Hiccup was certain he would not be flying any time soon.

Tuffnut fell off the rock and beside his friend; they were well hidden from the rest of the group. The two hoped it stayed that way until they got their strength up.

Tuffnut glanced at Hiccup; he had his eyes shut, "How long have we been working?" It seemed like forever to him.

"Hours." Hiccup uttered, "Probably five or six."

Tuffnut's shoulders drooped and he pressed himself against the rock, "I can't do this for much longer. I'm thirsty and hungry. I'm thungry."

The blond watched Hiccup's eyebrow twitch before his lip curled into a smile, he chuckled.

"What's so funny?"

Hiccup sighed. "In the past two days, we have been kidnapped, thrown in the bottom of a boat, and brought to a prison camp, and you're complaining about being thungry. Don't you miss Ruffnut?"

Tuffnut's face went blank. He turned away from Hiccup. Hiccup felt sorry, he hadn't meant to upset the blonde. He hesitantly reached up to pat Tuffnut on the back. Tuffnut wasn't as bad as Hiccup always believed, sure he was a bit dull at times, but he always knew how to make the others laugh. That's what Tuffnut was good at, he enjoyed making everyone laugh, and he also enjoyed picking on his sister. Now he wasn't sure if he would see his sister ever again.

A ringing noise filled the work site, making the two's heads bob out behind the rock with confusion. They watched as the men of the camp all dropped their equipment and raced down the hill. The two picked themselves off the ground and chased after the others. It didn't take long to catch up with Fray. He had one arm around Pavel's neck. Pavel was speaking animatedly in his own language.

"What's going on?" Hiccup asked Fray.

Fray reached over and ruffled Hiccup's hair. The tension of the workers was completely replaced by cheers and happy skipping down the hill. At the bottom, tables and chairs were placed out in rows in the shade. The sun had already started to go down, making the grass much cooler than the dusty rocks before. Hiccup almost sighed with relief as his metal foot hit leveled ground again. He glanced at Tuffnut who was staring at something with wide eyes and a smile. Hiccup followed his gaze to see endless amounts of food waiting to be served. It wasn't very nice looking, brown soup and stale looking bread, but to them it looked fit for a king. Hiccup felt Fray grab his arm. The other prisoners were already sitting down. On one side of the table, Aradynn sat next to Scar. Scar was tapping his hands on the table impatiently while Aradynn picked pieces of rocks out of his own hair. Fray took a seat beside Pavel. Hiccup's eyes traveled to the younger man. He gave Hiccup a wide smile and desperately patted the seat next to him. Hiccup hesitantly took a seat next to him.

He almost laughed as Tuffnut confidently sat himself beside Scar, who was much bigger and bulkier than him, and slammed his fists down on the table. His mouth was wide with a smile, he reminded Hiccup of Toothless before feeding time.

Tuffnut babbled about, ignoring the bald man beside him who was losing his patience for him, "They are serving food, aren't they? Like, they are going to feed us, right? Real food, not rocks? Gods they-"

Scar's arm reached up, covering Tuffnut's mouth. Hiccup studied the bigger man; he really didn't know much about him. He hadn't even heard him speak.

"You talk too much, Dreadlocks." Scar's voice was deep and foreign.

Hiccup watched Aradynn laugh as Tuffnut's face filled with fright. Hiccup turned and reached his head around an excited Pavel to speak with Fray. The leader's expression was neutral; he seemed much more serious than the other guys.

"Really though, they feed you guys dinner?"

"Wouldn't you work extra hard if you knew you were getting a full belly at the end of the night? It's the only thing that keeps us from killing ourselves."

Hiccup raised his eyebrows, "That is...heart warming."

Just as Hiccup closed his mouth, a small, steaming bowl of soup was placed beneath his chin. The others soon received their own bowls as well. Hiccup ate slowly. It seemed like ages since he had last eaten, and he knew that if he ate too much he would surely become sick. Tuffnut didn't seem worried about throwing up. He had most of the bowl devoured before Hiccup could even warn him to slow down.

"Tuffnut! You're going to be sick!"

"But... I haven't eaten in years," Tuffnut grumbled between bites. "How can you expect me to just not eat this food that has been given to me? This might be the best thing I've ever eaten... or the worst."

Hiccup wasn't quite sure about the soup either. Sure, it was edible, but if he didn't think he was going to die without it, he wouldn't have even touched it. The broth was a sludgy consistency with brown specks. He couldn't really tell what was in it. There was definitely some kind of vegetable that wasn't native to Berk, and chunks of something vaguely the consistency of meat. Hiccup had never considered himself a food connoisseur, but he knew that fish should be easily discerned from pork, or whatever.

The rest of the meal was loud just like the rest of the day, but it felt different. Earlier the noise had been rocks being crushed and moans of pain and discomfort. Now the tables were filled with loud burping and jokes. Pavel was excitedly telling a story; what it was about, no one knew, but it was nice to see everyone somewhat happy.

Hiccup could only imagine the struggles the other men had had to endure in their time on the island, but something in them still let them smile.

Hiccup was surprised to look down and see his bowl empty. In all the sudden excitement he'd ate it all without thinking. Tuffnut on the other hand, was not happy with the lack of soup in his own bowl. He stood up, grumbling something about being underfed and getting seconds. Hiccup felt the exhaustion from the day deep in his bones. He put his head down for a moment's rest.

Tuffnut sauntered to the front of the tables; he scooped a second helping of the black stew into his bowl and licked his lips. The portion in his bowl suddenly spilled over the table as a sudden pain hit the back of his head. He flinched and whipped around, everyone was enjoying their dinner. Just as Tuffnut turned to clean up the mess, he felt another pebble pelt him in the back of the head.

He was suddenly getting suspicious. He placed his bowl on the counter, his eyes narrowed. He looked away from the tables. Somehow, he hadn't noticed the sun set; lanterns had been lit all around the dining area and the rest of the island was dark. Tuffnut heard the music and laughter once again coming up from the village. He spotted something moving in the bushes. He caught sight of something white. It disappeared farther away from the area.

Tuffnut looked back to his friends. Hiccup was still resting his head on the table. Pavel was leaning over him; there was something strange about that guy. Aradynn, Scar and Fray hadn't even noticed Tuffnut leave. Tuffnut bit his lip, he had to investigate.

He moved towards the bushes. Whatever was there before was gone. He bent down to search through the bushes. All of a sudden, he felt another pebble hit the back of his neck. This one was quite sharp.

"Ouch!" he cried out, he turned around quickly and suddenly saw it.

It was a girl. She was mostly hidden in the dark of the night and he couldn't see much more than her silhouette. As Tuffnut rose to his feet, he noticed how short the silhouette was. She suddenly glided out of the trees, revealing herself. The first thing Tuffnut noticed was her piercing brown eyes. Then his eyes were drawn to her bright clothing; it was much too nice for her to be a prisoner. It was a white laced dress that went down to her ankles. Her hair was covered by a matching laced cloth that completely hid it. Tuffnut guessed that if her hair was visible it would be very dark, because her eyebrows were incredibly black.

Tuffnut jumped as the girl suddenly approached him. She was small, and she was fast. She was beside him within seconds. As quick as a dragon. She looked up to him with deep curiosity in her eyes.

"Sorry, I wanted to get you away from the others." She had an accent, just like Calder and the rest of the people on this island.

"Who are you?" Tuffnut raised an eyebrow, "And why did you lure me out here with tiny sharp pebbles of pain."

The girl's face changed from curiosity to surprise. She reached to her chest, pulling the cloth that kept her hair away tighter, "You're from Berk, are you not? My father told me about you."

Tuffnut nodded, "Yeah, that's true."

Her brown eyes shined in the moonlight. "What is it like there? Please, tell me everything!"

Tuffnut reached up and scratched his head, "Eh- its cold. Damp? And...dragon-like."

He watched as the girl's face lit up, she stepped closer to him making him back away, "So it's true! The Berkians did tame the dragons! Now, answer another question, do you have slaves back home?"

Tuffnut looked confused, so she repeated her question, "Do you have slaves? Or is everyone equal."

"Noo, we don't really do the slave thing. It's more of, everyone helps out. Except for me," Tuffnut smiled, "I didn't really help out. I hate doing dishes."

She smiled back to him. Her face suddenly fell, "I must go. My father will be expecting me."

Tuffnut shook his head with confusion and suddenly backed away, "Yeah, I should probably get back as well. I have some super terrible black stew to force down."

Just as the girl turned, she looked back to him, "What's your name? Please, so I can find you later. I still have so many questions."

"Tuffnut."

Her eyes sparkled with kindness, her heavy freckles stood out as she grinned. She reached into the pocket of her dress and pulled out a fresh apple. She took his hands and placed it in them. He looked down at the sugary fruit and his eyes widened.

"Thank you, Tuffnut." she added, "My name is Runa."

She raced away, Tuffnut was about to turn away when the girl stopped. She looked back to him with a grin, "I made that stew, by the way. I thought it was okay." she disappeared into the woods.

Tuffnut watched her sneak back into the trees. He stood in shock for a moment before looking down to the apple in his hands.

"That was strangeâ€|" he shrugged his shoulders and took a bite of the apple.

* * *

><p> Still no computer...Haha, that's why the updates take so long! Who is this new chick ? Runa...Hmmm we will see...

_Leave a review! _

12. Moving On

Chapter 12: Moving On

* * *

><p>As Astrid arrived just off Raven's Point, she took in the sight. A large pile consisting of wood and twigs was built up just at the end of the tree line. She had not been up there much. Of course, she would train in the forest occasionally but she never came to the edge of the cliffs. She looked over the edge to see the foamy blue waves crash on the large rocks below. The morning was a depressing one; the sky was empty of the sun. A gray haze seemed to cover them. Eret was adding to the pile of wood. Snotlout hugged himself as Fishlegs was comforting Ruffnut, who glanced at the pile of wood with determination in her eyes. Ruffnut's eyes traveled to Astrid, and then the others noticed her. She tightened her hold on the box as the eyes stared at her.<p>

She swallowed, "I brought what you said."

Ruffnut pushed herself off the ground and went to Astrid, "Good. The sooner we get started the better," she turned on her heel.

She went to the pile of wood and carefully took Tuffnut's belongings from the box and set them on the wood. Astrid had a stinging feeling as she did the same. She looked down at her box, everything that she had tossed inside seemed much more valuable than it did before. She reached in for the papers, but her hands stopped just as she did so. Maybe she should leave that for last. She reached for his shoe; she pulled it out of the box and placed it on the wood. No, that wouldn't do, it looked silly there. She picked it up and put it back in the box. She glanced over her shoulder to see that Ruffnut was almost done. She was just throwing Tuffnut's socks on the pile.

"I don't know if Tuffnut will need his dirty socks in Valhalla, Ruff." Snotlout put a hand on her shoulder.

Ruffnut wiped her teary eyes, "Yeah, he liked the smell of them. I want him to have them."

Snotlout's eyes swelled as well. He turned away from the girl, a slight sad smile appearing on his lips, "Alright then."

Astrid turned back to Hiccup's belongings. What would he want in Valhalla? His dragon. The forge. Her. She pursed her lips as she went through the designs. Most of them were for dragon saddles. One was a bread machine, lots of catapults. Would Hiccup really want those in Valhala? Of course he would.

Fishlegs got to his knees beside her, "Need any help?"

Astrid pulled her hair away from her face, "No. I'm good, thanks."

Fishlegs grabbed one of the designs and looked it over, "Is that a bread making machine?"

She let out a quiet laugh, "Yeah, it is."

Fishlegs did also, "He was so imaginative, I could never come up with the things he did! Like, look at these!" Fishlegs grabbed more from the box and read them to her, "Portable water skin holder, Dragon bunk beds, another catapult."

Fishlegs suddenly stopped. Looking down at a paper, his smile fell slightly as he took a deep breath. Astrid reached for the paper in his hands.

AShe gently took the paper from his hands and looked it over. Her shoulders dropped.

It was a cradle. The perfect cradle, one a lot different from the nightmare she had before. This one was covered in dragon designs. It had arrows all over it, Hiccup had jotted down notes about the type of wood he would use, springs to make it rock up and down. Paint colors.

"You okay?" Fishlegs asked her.

Astrid carefully folded up the design and stashed it away in her coat pocket. She used Fishleg's shoulder to pull herself up from the ground just as Eret spoke up.

"Alright, I think we are ready."

They stepped away from the stacked wood as Eret got to his knees. He rubbed his hands together and grabbed two sticks and rubbed them viciously together.

Snotlout snorted, "Eret?"

"Yeah?"

"You know we have dragons, right?"

Eret tilted his head with confusion. Snotlout just shook his head; he put his fingers in his mouth and whistled. Hookfang, who was relaxing with the other dragons, suddenly jolted up. He sent a blast so powerful to the pile of wood it caused an explosion. The gang turned their faces away as fire blazed the grass around it. Astrid blinked as the smoke reached her eyes and made her cough.

They turned to Snotlout, who was turning red with embarrassment. He shrugged, putting his hands in his pockets, "Well...Tuffnut always wanted to go out with a bang."

Eret suddenly let out a loud laugh, coughing it down. They all turned to him. He was biting his lip keeping in his laughter, "I'm sorry. That was just- Out with a bang!"

Fishlegs's mouth suddenly turned into a grin and he started giggling. Snotlout lost it soon after and soon the three men were brushing the mirth out of their eyes. Astrid, who was quite shocked, turned to Ruffnut, she herself had a slight grin on her lips.

Astrid shook her head as she watched the fire grow. The laughter

suddenly died, they all surrounded the flames and listened to the crackling of the wood. She felt her body shake as tears began to spring from her eyes. She wiped them quickly, clearing her throat. Ash from the flames began to fly towards them as the wind blew. Astrid felt Fishlegs grab her shoulder and pull her into a hug. She did not pull away. She let him comfort her. Snotlout brushed past her and his shoulders fell.

"I wanted to kill Tuff sometimes. I remember back when we were kids he would do the most annoyingest things ever." Snotlout turned to Ruffnut, who was carefully listening to him, "Remember that time you and him locked me out of the emergency bunker? I spent the entire night trying to get myself in. Tuffnut wouldn't budge. That moron." he looked down to the flames, "but he was still my best friend."

He stretched his neck, "And Hiccup, he was a good guy, even though he stole my chick."

Astrid let out a humorless laugh and shook her head, "I was never yours, Snotlout."

Snotlout bit his lip, "I can see that now." he turned to face Astrid; she was almost surprised to see tears clouding his eyes, "I am so sorry for the way I treated him all those years. I was jealous, his dad was the chief. I thought he had everything. I'm sorry," His voice hitched.

Astrid reached out and took his left hand in her own. His lips parted as she nodded, "He forgave you," Astrid rested against Snotlout's shoulder. Fishlegs reached out and put his hand on Snotlout's shoulder.

They watched the fire begin to die down. The belongings of their loved ones were taken, hopefully sent up to them to Valhalla.

Eret's eyes traveled to Ruffnut, she was standing behind her friends, watching the smoke, sparks from the fire touched the grass in front of her. Without thinking, he side stepped softly towards her and took her hand. Squeezing it, she looked up to him and smiled sadly.

* * *

><p>The days were beginning to get easier. Hiccup and Tuffnut had been prisoners for a little over four weeks now. Surprisingly, they had gotten used to their new routine fairly quickly. The mornings were always the hardest, getting up at the crack of dawn to haul rocks was hard. Hiccup often had to pull Tuffnut up by the arms and shake him awake. Once the work day was started, the two boys found it quite easy. And after all, it was worth it at the end of the day when they feasted. One particular day was more exciting than the rest.<p>

Hiccup, Tuffnut and their four other friends found themselves working on the shores of Coldstone Island. Each man seemed to have their own job. Frey and Scar, the two strongest men, were hauling the large logs from the rocky shores and chopping them up. Pavel, on the other hand, had the easier job of collecting sea shells to be sold at the town's market. Tuffnut was out in the ocean, checking the multiple fish nets for any sort of food. Hiccup almost laughed to himself as he saw his friend out in the crashing waves, his pant legs rolled up

to his knees even though the waves crashed well over his waist. Calder, who had somehow heard gossip of Hiccup's artistic abilities, had asked (or really, demanded) Hiccup to sketch out a map of Coldstone Island. He sat on a giant rock out by the water; it was there he had best view of the giant cliffs. As he sketched, he could not help to feel a little home sick. It had been four weeks since they had been taken. It had also been four weeks since Hiccup had a pencil in his hand. He took his time, carefully tracing each cliff to the exact measurement. He even added some extra shading, even though Calder would not believe it was unnecessary. When he finished the map, he took out the extra paper and started to doodle. The feeling of drawing was calming to him. He looked around; the day was a miserable one. Gray skies, the ocean was rough. The wind was whipping at him and he could taste salt from the sea.

Over his shoulder, he felt someone drop beside him. He turned to Aradynn carefully whittling a piece of twig. Hiccup was still not on the best of terms Aradynn. Aradynn's blue eyes suddenly pierced Hiccup's own. He reached down and snagged the paper from Hiccup's hands before he could protest.

Aradynn set the knife and twig aside, examining the drawings, "You are talented. I did not believe them."

Hiccup's eyebrow furrowed, he mumbled, "Thanks."

Aradynn turned the paper to face Hiccup, "Who is that?"

In the lower right corner was a sketch of a beautiful blonde. She had a slight grin, her hair in a perfect braid. Hiccup felt his chest tighten, "That's Astrid. We just got married a few months ago."

"Sa'shame," Aradynn studied the drawing and passed it back to Hiccup, "she's beautiful. You're a lucky man."

"_Was_ a lucky man. I probably will never see her again."

Aradynn reached over and slapped Hiccup in the back, making him almost fall off the rock.

"Do not be so negative. I'm sure you will be released one day. Give or take ten years," Aradynn smiled at him.

"I was hoping I would be home give or take nine months."

Aradynn raised an eyebrow, it took him a few seconds to clue in, "Ohh, you bugger. That's right, get her knocked up, then get yourself kidnapped. What were ya thinkin?"

Hiccup shook his head, "I have no clue. I really should have thought that through better, shouldn't I?"

They sat for a moment before they both started to laugh. Hiccup watched as Aradynn jumped from the rock and made his way back to Scar, "You're alright, Haddock. I don't hate you anymore."

Hiccup's smile hardly fell, "Thanks."

Tuffnut dragged himself up from the sea. He smelled like fish. Hiccup

jumped off the rock and went to meet him.

"This is impossible, how do they do this without dragons?" Tuffnut gestured to the empty nets.

"Toothless could catch a dozen fish in his mouth at once," Hiccup looked off in the distance, "he could probably do a better job than all those nets combined."

Tuffnut nodded, "Blech could too. Sometimes he caught lobsters."

By dusk, the five men, covered in sand, were escorted back to the dining area. Tonight's dinner was some sort of fish stew. Tuffnut could hardly wait to devour it, no matter how over cooked the fish was, but he was looking forward to something else as well. Tuffnut's little secret, something only he knew of.

He quickly gulped down his stew. Thankfully, Hiccup was being bombarded with congratulations as Aradynn told news to the table of Hiccup's fatherhood; Hiccup's cheeks went red as the men slapped him on the back. Tuffnut would have had the same reaction when Hiccup told him four weeks ago whilst being stuck in the dark in a cold damp boat, but the mood wasn't just right. Tuffnut found this the perfect time to sneak away. He pushed himself up from the table and headed to the outskirts of the dining area. He sat himself down past the bushes on a rock. He had hardly sat down as something appeared from the trees. Or someone. Runa nudged Tuffnut to the left and sat down beside him.

"You certainly don't waste time," Tuffnut laughed.

Runa grinned, "I do not have much time to spare. I make dinner for the prisoners at six, and then my parents expect me home for dinner by six-fifteen. It does not help when I have to clean dishes too.' She explained.

Tuffnut nodded, "What do you want to talk about tonight?"

"Continue from last week," Runa pounded on his chest a few times, "tell me about Snuggletog!"

Tuffnut roared with laughter, "N-no, it's Snoggletog. Like I said before, it's our winter holiday, when Odin comes and leaves gifts for everyone. The dragons also go and lay their eggs, so when they come back Berk is always taken over by baby dragons."

Runa's face lit up with delight. She jumped up from the rock and twirled, "Oh! What I wouldn't do for a dragon! What I wouldn't do to be able to grow wings and fly to this place. To think, having my very own dragon. Even seeing a dragon would be marvelous!"

"You've never seen a dragon?"

"Only in books," she looked down to him with gloom, "Dragons do not seem to wonder this far east. I wish they did."

Tuffnut searched her excited gaze, "alright. Let's say dragon did fly this east. What type of dragon would you like?"

Runa's hands clasped together and she bit her lip, "I would like a

Zippleback. Just like you!"

"You have to have someone else to ride a Zippleback, like I have my sister."

Runa shook her head, "Of course. Of course, what was I thinking? Oh!" She turned, "Then I would like a black one! Just like your friend Hiccup!"

Tuffnut shook his head once more, "Sorry. Only one left in the whole world and Hiccup called dibs."

Runa sat down, "I cannot remember the other dragons. I just want one that will be loyal to me. One that will love me as much as I love it."

Tuffnut grinned at her, "Don't worry, we will find you a type. Everyone has a type."

Runa, who finally was self-aware of her excitement, blushed away with embarrassment. She suddenly jumped up from her rock and went to take off once more. Tuffnut grabbed her hand before she could run.

Runa looked with confusion. Tuffnut opened her palm, "I forgot to give this to you. Pavel found it for me."

She looked down to her palm to see a perfectly white sea shell. She stroked it, it was smooth. She lifted her head and gazed into his kind eyes. Tuffnut expected her to stay something; instead she averted her eyes and stepped away.

"I will promise you something," she whispered to him.

"What?" Tuffnut asked with confusion.

Runa looked up once more, her eyes filled with determination, "I will help you escape."

* * *

><p>Wow, that was definitely not supposed to take so long to be updated. Truth be told I finished the chapter last week but my Beta was super busy and I couldn't upload it without her. _On the bright side, next chapter will be coming very soon._

_Don't forget to review. _

(at least Hic and Tuff are finally fitting in, right?)

13. The Flight

The Flight

Tuffnut could not believe it, was there really a way home? Runa said she could do it, she could help him escape, and that made Tuffnut's adrenaline run. The thought of being home, with his dragon and friends and sister gave him a kind of hope he hadn't felt since arriving on the island. The thought of eating proper feasts in the great hall and drinking until he was drunk seemed almost too good to

be true.

As Runa drew closer to him, he breathed staggeringly, "I- I- I- what? You know how- You think you could-"

Her cheeks and lips were rosy red from the air, "Stop stuttering. Listen; there is something very important I need to tell you. Something none of the prisoners have ever known."

Tuffnut plopped down on the rock, and watched her pace hesitantly, pulling at the cloth around her head.

She sucked on her finger, "At the start of devastating winter, my father takes the strongest of our prisoners away from here. He tells me he sells them, I don't know who buys them, maybe one of our neighboring islands," she waved her hands, "We have five weeks till Devastating Winter, if you can somehow prove to my father that you are one of the strongest prisoners, perhaps he will take y-"

"Hold on," Tuffnut raised his hands, "Who is your father?"

Runa bit at her finger once more, "Calder Grey."

Tuffnut choked on his breath, Runa watched him drag his hands through his hair. "Calder is your father!?"

Losing patience, Runa grabbed him by the arms and lifted him to a standing position; she looked him straight in the eyes, "Yes. Calder is my father. Now, please listen." she licked her lips, "if my father takes you away, there is no way you will ever be on this damned island again, I promise you that."

Tuffnut snorted, "And how do I know I won't end up in a place worse than here."

Something flickered in Runa's eyes, she looked taken backed, "Nowhere is worse than here."

For a second, Tuffnut thought he had hurt her feelings; he was glad moments later when she bounced back, "besides. I know the men who sail our ships." her cheeks blushed, "In fact; I am courting with one of the sailors right now. I can convince him of anything, so once you get on board I will convince him to take us to your island, where your people can buy you back."

Tuffnut felt something in his chest; he had never thought that Runa could be the type of person to flirt her way through things. He took another breath, "This plan seems crazy. But I like crazy," he smiled down to her then quickly stiffened, "But we would have to bring my Chief, Hiccup, too."

Runa nodded, "As long as my father picks the two of you, I'm sure this plan will work. But I want you to promise me something as well. I want you to take me to Berk as well."

Tuffnut's lips pressed together, "I guess that shouldn't be a problem, but won't your father come looking for you?"

Runa's head raised, "I don't care if he does. I would rather die than stay here the rest of my life."

Without another word, Runa turned on her heel, leaving Tuffnut alone in the snowy trees. Her foot steps got quieter as she disappeared into the night. Tuffnut stayed frozen for a moment as he pondered. He wondered if this could really work. It seemed like his only shot of survival. But there were so many variables. If they messed this up, he could end up dead. And Runa could get into serious trouble. His thoughts ceased as another sound of steps caught at his ear. He swung around to see Hiccup watching him carefully in the night.

"Tuffnut?" he questioned, "what are you doing out here?"

Tuffnut searched the trees; Runa had just escaped in time. He couldn't tell him about her. Not yet. He swallowed, thinking of an excuse.

"Were you talking to someone?" Hiccup walked closer to him.

"I-"

"Where do you keep disappearing to?" Hiccup raised an eyebrow.

Soon they were very close. Hiccup searched Tuffnut's eyes for the answer and Tuffnut could almost feel sweat dripping down his forehead despite the weather.

"No one." he lied, "I just...I come out here occasionally for some alone time."

Hiccup's eyebrows narrowed more, suddenly, to Tuffnut's pleasure; his face fell back into one of kindness.

"Of course," he said, "I understand."

Tuffnut laughed nervously. As Hiccup turned back to the dining area, he questioned Tuffnut once more, "What was I thinking. It's not like you would keep a secret from me, right?"

Tuffnut froze. He laughed very loudly, "Of course not."

"...Good," Hiccup nodded and smiled back at him.

* * *

><p>Ekon kept his cold, dry hands stuffed away in his pockets as he traveled to the edge of Berk. Toothless had his claws on the edge of the cliff, back arched, searching the sky for other dragons. The dragon stretched out one wing at a time as if they ached. It had been almost five months since he had taken flight. Well, there was that one time that Eret had tried to ride him, but they the thought of Eret falling off of Toothless.<p>

He had fallen on top of an unimpressed yak, which had proceeded to kick him between the legs. Gasps and laughs had come from the bystanders who watched as Eret held his middle with pain, Ruffnut laughing at his side. Tara jumped from Ekon's shoulders and chased after Toothless' swinging black tail. She grabbed hold of his tail as it continued to swing. Finally, the dragon had turned around with annoyance and growled. Tara reared back on her legs with surprise.

She hopped back to Ekon and climbed up his legs.

"Don't be afraid," Ekon whispered to her, "he wouldn't hurt you."

Turning back, he saw the dark green eyes of the Night Fury. His face was dangerous. The Berkians knew not to bother the heart-broken dragon; they knew how dangerous he could be once approached threateningly. The only things he truly felt comfortable around were the other dragons and Astrid. But he couldn't fly on his own and Astrid was too pregnant to fly anyway. The large dragon spent his time watching the seas. Some said he was still waiting for Hiccup. Others said that the mighty beast would remain waiting for him forever. Some of the children said that in a thousand years the dragon would be frozen in stone, just waiting and watching, waiting and watching.

The younger Hofferson could see past those dangerous eyes, underneath was a wanting. Toothless was dying to spread his wings and fly. Ekon wanted him to fly.

Ignoring the growl of warning, Ekon reached out with his hand and pet the dragon's head. Toothless bore his teeth as Ekon's hands curled under his chin. Ekon knew what he had to do, he ran to the forge. Gobber bid the Hofferson boy hello, and he was about to slide an axe in the younger boy's hand but he protested, "I'm sorry, Gobber. I can't help you right now. I'm going to do something important." within minutes Ekon had found what he was looking for and was running back to Toothless.

Getting the saddle onto Toothless was probably the hardest part. Toothless' growls had ceased, and instead he watched with curiosity as Ekon buckled the many leather straps into place. Ekon had to practically lift the giant dragon's leg to get it through the holes. Ekon bit his tongue as he managed the gears. Considering he did not have the foot work of Hiccup, he mechanically switched Toothless' tail to gliding position. Ekon stepped back to view the mighty beast. This was how he remembered seeing Toothless. Toothless looked down at himself, he looked to the red tail which was locked into position. He gave the boy a look. Ekon figured that that look was as big of a thank you as he could get.

Ekon took a deep breath and climbed up on Toothless. The wind whipped at his hair as the dragon spread his wings. Ekon had expected Toothless to take off. Instead he stood for a spell or two, his wings spread. All of a sudden, they were off. Ekon yelled with surprise as they bolted up into the sky. The young boy held on with dear might as the dragon pulled himself into the sky. He opened his eyes once they were up. Sure, he had been flying before, but he had never been on a Night Fury before! Toothless let out a roar of happiness as he skidded close to the water. Ekon's lips shook as they flew, a smile grew on them. He patted the dragon as they flew. Tara was tugged safely away in Ekon's shirt, her tiny paws scratching at his chest. Tara popped her head out from his shirt, Ekon laughed at the sight of her. Her dragon eyes were wide with confusion. She had never been on water before. Her paws slipped over his collar and her wings flapped with excitement.

It was the happiest moment of her life.

Winter was coming, the trees had finally lost their leaves and a cold wind whipped at the Berkians' noses. Of course, this was the busiest time of the year for the Berkians. Everyone was racing against the clock. The older women were quickly knitted as many blankets, sweaters and gloves as they could. Some adults had gone off with their dragons looking for game elsewhere. Astrid kept one hand on her bulging stomach as she carried the milk bucket. She entered her mother's home and placed the milk bucket on the table. Boxes of vegetables lay all over the kitchen. Ingrid was taking inventory, soon all the vegetables would be brought up to The Great Hall for everyone to share. Ingrid grinned at her daughter as she eyed the vegetables with amazement.

"You really out did yourself this year, mom." Astrid told her.

Ingrid gestured for her daughter to sit and she did so. She was hardly just getting used to carrying around the extra weight. At five months pregnant, her ankles swelled and she was quite thankful to be sitting down. On the bright side, her mood had changed drastically. No more morning sickness, no more tiredness. Yes, things were finally looking up for the young women.

"How's my grandchild today?" Ingrid asked without looking up from her paper.

Astrid smiled, "Still good. And still kicking like crazy."

Astrid remembered the first time she felt her baby move underneath her skin. She was in Gobber's forge, they had been talking about something unimportant. She remembered stopping mid sentence and Gobber raising his eyebrows in concern. She remembered reaching down with her hands and pressing them to her stomach. Her heart raced and she almost jumped as she felt yet another flutter. One hand reached up and clasped over her mouth in surprise. Gobber had suddenly darted towards her and breathed, "What's wrong?"

Astrid took away her hand and grasped Gobber's. She held it to her stomach and Gobber's eyebrows furrowed in confusion. He let out a sudden noise as another kick happened. He looked up with a smile. And for the first time in a long time, she gave him a smile back.

"Very good," Ingrid looked her daughter down, "You look tired, are you tired?"

"No," Astrid shook her head. Her mother was always worrying about her lately, it was borderline annoying but she knew her mother just wanted to help.

The two looked at each other as a yell of excitement came from their front door. Astrid gave her mother a confused look. She rushed to the door just as she heard her name being called out. She opened it to find Fishlegs, covered in sweat with the dragon manual in his hands.

"Fishlegs!" she said, "What's going on?"

Fishlegs grinned from one ear to the other. As carefully as he could, he grabbed her arm and pulled her outside.

"Look!" Fishlegs pointed to the sky.

The confused girl checked the sky and she saw it. It was Toothless! He was flying again! And then she saw the rider, her very own brother. She could hear Ekon howl with delight as they zoomed across the island. A smile appeared on her face as she gripped Fishlegs' arm.

"He's flying!" she exclaimed.

"I know!" he was shaking with excitement, "this is totally awesome!"

As the dragon landed, Ekon gave them a goofy smile, his hair tousled from the flight. He slid off the saddle just in time for his sister to attack him with a hug. He let out an oof.

She ruffled his hair, "You got him to fly. Thank you, Ekon. He really needed it."

Ekon shrugged, "It was probably not as good as having Hiccup. But I thought it was pretty fun, didn't you, Toothless?" Ekon turned to the dragon, who was still purring from the flight. Astrid slid passed him and rubbed Toothless on the head.

"Good boy!" she laughed as he nudged at her stomach, "Good boy! You have no idea how happy I am right now!" she kissed his head.

The dragon smiled at her. Yes. This was a good day.

* * *

><p>So they might have a chance to escape? WOW! Cool!

_Don't forget to leave a review. _

14. A Final Goodbye

Chapter 14: A Final Goodbye

* * *

><p>Hiccup came to in a room of darkness. He felt the chilly air kiss his skin as he shivered. He sat up on his elbows and looked at his cell mates. Four were sleeping softly except for Tuffnut who lay on his back with his eyes on the rock ceiling. Hiccup sat up and felt his bones rattle. He was running on burnt fumes. His skin tender and burned from the rays of the sun, blistered covered his foot and hands, not to mention the pain flaring in his prosthetic leg. He ran his hands through his thick matted hair, never in his life had it been so long, almost passed his shoulders. He was even unaware of the scruff he had grown; it was a new thing for him. What Hiccup would have given for a hot bath and a razor.<p>

Hiccup plopped down beside his friend, they had grown tired of talking; they had found comfort in sitting in silence. As long as Hiccup and Tuffnut were aware they had each other to rely on, this Hel was not as scary. They sat hungry, cold, and tired. Hiccup sucked

on the damp rag and could not help but hear the dripping from the distant. Drip, drip, drip. On days like this, he blocked home away from his mind. It only made things worse, to think about the life left behind him. His wife and unborn child. Drip. His dragon. His friends and mother and Gobber. Drip, His own special place in Gobber's forge, full of designs and pictures and books. Drip. Drip. Drip.

It had not taken long for the other prisoners to wake up and get ready for the day. The men were ready by the time Calder had come for them. They made their way out of the cave, Hiccup had gotten use to the darkness and allowed his feet to carry him out by memory. It was today that five filthy, worn out coats had been waiting for them at their work area. Calder had said the weather had been getting worse, and they were no use frozen. Hiccup grabbed one and tugged it on. It was cold, but it blocked out the wind. Hiccup looked around the island and saw snow slowly falling down. Winter. As a kid, he remembered the first snow fall to be exciting, the thought of snow Vikings and Snoggletog and the fires he spent curled up beside his father; that meant nothing now. Now winter just meant darkness and coldness.

The rocks were getting harder and harder to extract from the caves. He took each one with caution of the walls above him. Every creak and crack scared him to death, one wrong move and the walls would come tumbling down around him. Aradynn had told him not to worry, he said they had not had a cave in all year, it was a tad comforting. Hiccup felt empty of hope and energy as he piled the rocks into the barrel and pushed it down to Tuffnut.

He was surprised to see Tuffnut already done of the rocks he had just given him. The male twin had been surprisingly energetic about his work lately, he chopped harder and quicker. Hiccup could see the sweat falling from his forehead. He dropped the wheel barrel and began transferring the rocks from it to the ground. Tuffnut had come over to help him.

Hiccup wiped the sweat from his brow and asked, "You have certainly been working hard."

"I guess I have gotten use to the job," Tuffnut said, "besides, the hard work keeps me warm."

Hiccup laughed, "I wish it kept me warm."

Tuffnut frowned, "Well, maybe you aren't working hard enough."

Taken back from the comment, Hiccup raised his head to look at Tuffnut. He seemed determined in his work, not even noticing the comment he had said. He picked up the pick axe and slammed it down onto the rock. Hiccup swallowed hard and wiped his hands. Tuffnut was probably just having a bad day or something. They had a lot of bad days lately.

The rest of the work day was exhausting like always. Soon enough, he found himself sitting at one of the dinner tables with his friends, sipping on the warm fish stew. It was the time of day he always looked forward too, the thing that kept him sane. Aradynn was leaning back on his chair and lifted his feet up onto the table. Scar had his arms crossed, intently listening to the conversation. Pavel was

joyful like always, his smile lit up like a fire. Tuffnut seemed distant, but it was not surprising. All eyes were focused on Frey as he spoke his story.

"My father lost me in a bet when I was nine," he scratched his chin, "I was taken to live with a good family for awhile. A lot better than my drunken dad. They were nice to me and fed me, all I could ask of them really.

"But then when I was fifteen, they could not afford to keep me no longer. They said, 'Frey, you're a man now. We can't be taken care of you no longer; we are not even your real mom and dad. You got to go out into the real world and find yourself a nice girl and settle down have some nice kiddies of your own and live happily ever after.' Yeah, as you can see everything turned out great."

Aradynn leaned forward, "So how did you get yourself into this mess?"

Frey grinned, "I was what you call smart mouthed. I was like a Pilgrim, really. Traveling around trying to find a home; spent a lot of my time out at sea. I then found myself at Warheads."

Hiccup jolted, "Warheads? You were at Warheads?"

Frey nodded, "Yes, the same son of a bitch who put you in here put me in here too. I did a few hands on jobs for him. He said he really liked me and was considering letting me stay in the tribe permanently. Let's just stay I did not like how he ran his village, I may have made a few comments and thrown a few punches and before I knew it Calder had me in his slimy hands."

Hiccup felt anger in his chest, "He tricked me. Now my tribe probably thinks I am dead, that's probably what he wanted. He probably took over Berk. Who knows what happened to my family and friends," his eyes traveled to Tuffnut who hadn't seemed at all interested in this conversation.

Aradynn reached out and punched Hiccup on the shoulder, "I'm sure your girl is fine, Hiccup."

Pavel leaned forward; "Girl?" his accent was strong.

Hiccup turned to him and smiled, "My wife, Astrid."

A look of curiosity filled his face, "As-trid?"

"She was beautiful. Blonde hair, blue eyes. The toughest Viking I ever knew."

Pavel's eyes lit up with concentration as he put the words together, "Beautiful blonde."

Aradynn reached over and grabbed the boy's shoulders, "Here, Pavel Boy, just picture someone as pretty as me with the hair of Frey," he reached over and grabbed Frey's pony tail sticking it in Pavel's face. Frey groaned with anger and pulled away.

Later that night, when they were all back in the cave, Hiccup sprawled out on the floor with his new coat wrapped around his

shoulders. Pavel was staring at him. Hiccup said good night and before he could turn around Pavel reached out and grabbed his shoulders, "Beau-ful blonde?" he said.

Hiccup grinned, "That's right, Beautiful blonde."

Pavel smiled and curled into his own ball of comfort.

* * *

><p>Astrid was suddenly awakened by a drawn out cry for help. It was hardly the crack of dawn; she quickly got up and wrapped her shawl around her cold body. She and her mother, who met in the hallway, exchanged worried glances. The yell had come from Ekon's room. Astrid pushed the door open, Ekon was up against the wall, his eyes squeezed closed, his breathes were staggered. Ingrid rushed in the room and grabbed her son by his shoulders.<p>

"What is it, son?" she exclaimed, "Whatever is the matter?"

He muttered something unrecognizable. His bangs were covering his eyes. With his left hand, he slowly lifted a pointed finger. Astrid followed it and her heart sank. A limp figure, cold and like stone, was lying in the nest Ekon had provided. Astrid gently stroked it, and it limply flipped over to reveal Tara. She was gone. Astrid's shoulders drooped as she heard Ekon's whimpers.

"She's dead, isn't she?"

Astrid turned around to see her brother, his face hidden by his hands. He could not bear to look. She swallowed hard. She knew the little dragon was sick, and she was not the strongest one of the litter, but Astrid had been certain this baby dragon would make it. How could this have happened, why were terrible things always happening to the people she loved? She felt her heart break as Ekon rushed forward.

"I thought she was getting better! Oh Thor, this is all my fault!" his breathe staggered.

Ingrid tried to comfort him but he squirmed away from her grasp, "No!" he screamed, "this wasn't supposed to happen! I told you she was sick and you two didn't care! All you care about is that damn baby!" Ekon looked at his sister with rage. Astrid staggered backwards, her mouth opened but she could not think of any words.

Ingrid gasped, "Ekon Hofferson, you calm yourself down right now." she grabbed his arm again but he pulled away and bolted out of the room, slamming the door behind him making Astrid blink. She returned to the sight of the dead dragon. Ingrid touched her arm softly, "He's just upset. He didn't mean any harm."

Astrid nodded, "I know..."

Ekon was running as fast than his feet could carry him. He passed people who were muttering offenses at the way he pushed his way through them. He climbed the hill to the Chief's old house and burst through the front door without knocking. Valka sat with a shocked look at the table. His chest puffed with anger as the warm salty

tears poured from his eyes. Valka had seen the look of despair on his face and rose from her chair. Ekon ran to her and hugged her. Taken aback, Valka stood in shock before wrapping her arms around the crying boy.

"Tara's dead," he cried.

Valka gasped, the dragon had just seemed to be getting better. She held his shoulders and sat him down in a chair. She got him some tea and sat down beside him. Ekon cried to himself as she did so. She let him cry silently for a minute or two before he sniffed and wrapped his hands around his stomach.

Ekon wiped his eyes and looked at her, "It's all my fault."

Valka pursed her lips, "You must not blame yourself. There is nothing you could have done to prevent it."

"No, it really is! I took her flying on Toothless yesterday. It must have been too much for her, I killed her!" he cried.

Valka shook her head and took his hand, "You hold your tongue." Valka took his hands away from his face and held them firmly. His lip was quivering and he looked away from her. Valka searched her mind for something, anything to say to the heart broken boy. Something suddenly struck her; she never got the chance to raise Hiccup. By the time she was with him again he was already an adult. As she looked down at the crying boy she tried to imagine what it would be like to be a real mother. It was hard.

Valka shook her head. She reached over and took his hands from his face. He wanted to look away, but the sternness in her eyes stopped him. He swallowed a shaky breath, "Why do bad things keep happening?"

Valka took in his question; she was almost at lost for words.

"I do not know," she whispered, "I lost my home, my husband- something caught on her throat, "my son."

She continued, "I do not know why bad things always happen. I know how much you loved Tara, and you cared for her so well. She would not have made it as far as she did without you.

"Tara was one of the strongest dragons I knew. Not physically, but she had the will to live and you and I both saw that. Maybe it was just her time to go, but I suppose she is far off in Valhalla with Stoick and Hiccup."

Tears fell down her cheeks, "And the three of them are smiling down on us. Tara would want you to be strong and go on without her, do you understand, Ekon?"

He sniffed loudly and wiped a hand across his face, "Y-yeah." after a moment he sighed, "I want to bury her."

Valka's lips curled into a smile, "then let's get started."

* * *

><p>Ruffnut was in the arena practicing her knife throwing skills. She had a lot of extra time on her hands and spent most of it learning new tricks and abilities she would have learned if she had payed any attention to Hiccup and Astrid's lessons from years ago. She was getting stronger at almost everything, and she was good at it too. The crush Snotlout and Fishlegs had on Ruffnut had been long forgotten, and the three of them were back to being friends. Although, Ruffnut still liked to be by herself once and awhile.<p>

Or with Eret.

Something had changed between them. It was not the girlish crush she had formed from him the first time they met, it was something different. Her days seemed brighter with him around. It was like she could suddenly see what was in front of her and stop looking in the past. When he was not around, she almost felt like something was missing. Ruffnut was not sure if she was ready for a relationship, she was not sure if Eret even liked her in that way. She liked to take her confusion out on the targets in front of her.

Eret walked up behind her startling her. He placed a hand on her shoulder causing her to turn around with a knife high in her hand. He let out a yelp of shock and backed away.

"Gods, don't you know not to sneak up on a girl with a knife?" she rolled her eyes.

The smile on her face faded when she saw his face. She had come accustomed to this face and knew exactly what it meant.

"Oh no," her eyebrows knitted together, "what happened now?"

He moved closer and sighed, "Ekon's little dragon died. We are having a funeral for her soon."

Ruffnut shoulders slugged, she had heard so much about that little dragon and Ekon must have been crushed.

She played with one of her braids, "That sucks. That really sucks."

Eret nodded sadly, "Yeah. Will you go with me?"

Confused, Ruffnut paused, "Go with you?"

"To the funeral," he said, "I just thought maybe we could go together, so we didn't have to go alone."

A silence filled the space between them. Ruffnut raised an eyebrow, "Sure I guess so."

For only a moment. Eret looked down to her with a look she did not know. At some point, snow must have started falling from the sky for Eret had snowflakes covering his eyelashes and dark hair sticking out sharply. The muddy arena was suddenly covered in fresh naked snow. It seemed where they stood was untouched by any other force, and it was just him and her. His face was hard with a frown; it seemed to soften just a tad as he leaned down closer to her. Ruffnut felt a snowflake fall on her nose, her heart raced as Eret traced her shoulder blade

with his cold fingers. He exhaled, causing the heat of his breath to warm her frozen cheeks. Then he did something funny, he touched his nose to hers. For a moment, she seemed paralyzed; she wanted to pull away but the harder she tried the closer she got to him. When their lips were only inches away, she broke the spell and backed away from him.

"I'll see you at the funeral," and she left him without another word.

Ekon made his way to the edge of the forest. Waiting for him were a small group of people. He looked around, Snotlout, Fishlegs, Eret, Ruff, Astrid, his mother, Valka and Gobber stood around a casket. Ekon looked at it, it was hand crafted, and he looked inside to see Tara so peaceful. He found comfort looking down at the small dragon. Her scales were no longer dull, her body calm instead of shaky. Her once unsteady features seemed so peaceful. Ekon bit his cheek as he walked up to his sister.

He gave her a sad look, "I'm sorry what I said about you and the baby. I didn't mean it. I was just upset," he said softly

She pulled him into a hug and rested her chin on his shoulder, "I know. I know what you must be feeling right now. I'm so sorry, Ek."

Ekon released her and looked at the others, "Thank you all for coming, it would mean a lot to her. She would want to be remembered."

Eret raised his chin, "And that she will be. That cheeky little dragon."

Gobber rested a heavy hand on Ekon's shoulders, "She was one of a kind, wasn't she?"

Ekon smiled at the man. His mother took his other shoulder and kissed him softly on the cheek. Ekon turned to her.

"I'm proud of what you did," she held his chin; "You are a kind, loving boy, Ekon. Just like your father."

Astrid's eyes lit up, her mother rarely mentioned their father.

Eventually, Ekon picked up a shovel. He and Fishlegs and Snotlout dug a deep hole. It was much harder now that the ground was practically frozen. They threw their shovels aside and lifted the casket into the hole.

Ekon wiped his forehead and looked at the tiny dragon one last time. He supposed it was time he said something. A final goodbye.

"When she was born, I remember bringing her to Hiccup. He didn't think she would live, he said she was too small." he licked his lips, "But I guess that didn't matter to her, because, she kept moving forward, even when she should have stopped.

"I guess, it was just her time to go, and I am glad she is not suffering anymore."

With that, Ekon lifted his shovel and covered the hole.

As the group of people made their way back into town to have some hot mutton, Fishlegs noticed Astrid waddling along quietly. She was deep in thought. Fishlegs let the others go past him and walked next to the girl.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked her.

She seemed a bit dazed. When she looked up to him, he could not help to notice her hand on her stomach for the first time.

"Ekon never got to meet my dad," she said. "He was only four months old when my dad died. I remember him, sort of. Little glimpses of things from the past."

Fishlegs let her go on.

She looked straight on, "my baby will never get to meet his father either. But maybe he will turn out okay, just like Ekon did."

Fishlegs smiled, "So you think it's a boy?"

She grinned, "Shut up."

* * *

><p>My beta said this was her favorite chapter I wrote so far. I don't know, I kind of like it too.

So what do you guys think? Boy or Girl? Leave a review telling me what you think and add a baby name if you want.

See you next time!

End
file.